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ABSTRACT

The Early Childhood Initiative (ECI), supported by the Fund for New York City Public Education, operates in four New York City schools, reinventing the early childhood classroom by combining special education and general education team teaching and a heterogeneous mix of students with developmentally appropriate instruction, authentic assessment, and parent partnerships. Ongoing staff development efforts help refine the model. The model departs in a fundamental way from inclusion programs that focus on one or two special education students in a general education classroom. It actually reduces general education class size to allow for full integration of special and general education students. A total of 396 students were served in ECI classrooms in the 4 schools. Of these, 111 (28%) were labeled as having special educational needs. During the 1994-95 school year, 8 students were decertified, including 3 of the 12 special-needs students in the 2 ECI prekindergarten classrooms. This report presents the stories of 7 general education and 8 special education ECI students with interpretations of their progress by 11 experts in early childhood education. Three appendixes describe the ECI population and evaluation sample, list the members of the study validation panel, and describe the evaluation method. These narratives evaluate the program by showing how the children are doing. The expert panel expressed continuing concerns about only 1 of the 15 students profiled. (SLD)

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The New York City Early Childhood Initiative
Year II Evaluation

Learning Together: Children's Progress in Integrative Early Childhood Education

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The New York City Early Childhood Initiative
Year II Evaluation

Preface

Learning Together: Children's Progress in Integrative Early Childhood Education

Janeille, a Hispanic child, entered a separate special education kindergarten at age six with no language. She was labeled "special education" and scored in the lowest percentile on the New York City English Language Battery. Now in second grade, she is working on a Mayan Civilization theme with her peers, is speaking in English and Spanish, and has made the school honor roll for three of the four grading periods this year.

Lindsay excels in all academic and artistic pursuits. Teachers characterize her as an independent child who "marches to her own drummer." Although extremely bright and creative, Lindsay entered kindergarten this year after a difficult preschool experience where she had trouble making new friends among already established cliques of children. Lindsay's mother reported that Lindsay frequently chose to stay home from preschool even though she loved her teacher. This year, Lindsay has found her niche within the kindergarten class and is no longer "on the outside looking in." Lindsay has developed a number of friends and, while maintaining her independence and creativity, now eagerly joins in group activities.

Dylan was labeled by the system as "special education" at three years old. Now two years later, that label is being officially removed. Teachers say he is making incredible connections in his learning. But, most important, at the age of five, Dylan is learning to identify and avoid the situations and relationships that have previously gotten him into trouble. He is now making choices that teachers feel will help him succeed.

Second grader Channel, exposed to crack as a developing infant, faces a number of serious challenges, not the least of which is a severe emotional disturbance and a struggle with aggressive behaviors. Nevertheless, Channel is on grade level in mathematics, and though she lags behind her peers in reading, she is learning to enjoy books and the stories they reveal. Her favorite book is *Snow White* because, according to teachers, she identifies with this heroine who, like her, lost her real family and must grow up with substitute caregivers.

These are snippets from the stories of just a few of the children learning and growing within Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) classrooms. We were particularly struck by their individual stories and the mosaic of diversity, talent, and challenges they create.

In all a total of 396 students were served in the ECI classrooms within the four schools supported by the Fund for New York City Public Education. Of these students, 111 (28%) were labeled as having special educational needs. During the 1994-1995 school year eight students were decertified. This number includes three of the twelve (25%) students with special needs served in the two ECI pre-kindergarten classrooms.

The following report presents the stories of the progress of some of these children. Each story stands on its own and contributes to the overall themes of progress that have been drawn across all of the children followed during the year. Expert educators and early childhood specialists provide their interpretations of the magnitude of progress made by individual children.

Acknowledgements

We would like to once again thank the dedicated teachers and administrators on the "front lines" at PS #15, #321, and #372 in District 15 and PS #150 in District 30 who so generously invited us into their schools and classrooms for the second year of the Early Childhood Initiative Evaluation. In addition, it is important to underscore that the ongoing collaboration and visionary leadership of District 15 and District 30 superintendents, Bill Casey and Angelo Gimondo, has been vital to sustaining the initiative within each school. We also do not want to forget the numerous administrators and staff developers at District 15 and District 30 and the New York City Board of Education, who have provided ongoing data, support, and encouragement for our efforts.

Finally, we want to heartily acknowledge those who have generously supported the Early Childhood Initiative during the 1994-1995 school year and have made its evaluation possible: The Travelers Foundation, the Leon Lowenstein Foundation, Inc., the Rhodebuck Charitable Trust, and the Max Rosenfeld Foundation. We also thank the Carnegie Foundation for making this evaluation of student impacts possible.

The Carnegie Foundation does not take responsibility for the statements or views expressed within this report.

Introduction

Early Childhood Initiative

The Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) is supported in four New York City Schools by the Fund for New York City Public Education. These four schools, PS #15, #321, and #372 in Brooklyn and PS #150 in Queens are part of the "Plus Program" currently operating in 29 schools across the city. The goal of ECI is to create child-centered learning environments that encourage early school successes for all students and eliminate tracking that occurs as children with diverse strengths and needs progress through the city school system.

The ECI model "reinvents" the early childhood classroom by combining special education-general education team teaching and a heterogeneous mix of students with developmentally appropriate instruction, authentic assessment, and parent partnerships. Ongoing professional development emphasizing teacher professionalism and collegiality is helping to refine the model.

A Children's Initiative

The Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) seeks to foster high expectations and provide all young children with models for success. It is designed to provide an effective alternative to the widespread practice of tracking children by perceived ability. The negative and sometimes devastating effects of this practice on young children—especially those tracked into the lower levels of academic achievement—have been well documented. By changing instructional practices to offer all children rich opportunities for learning from the youngest ages—when they are still motivated and confident—potential learning problems among children at risk of academic failure may be prevented or diminished. This is far more likely to be successful and is less costly than correcting problems at a later stage in a child's development.

Research also indicates that high achievers neither learn better in homogeneous groups nor lose ground in diverse-ability classes when appropriate instructional strategies are used. In mixed-ability classes where challenging curricula and an active approach to learning and instruction are used, confident learners can play leadership roles, learn to share their knowledge, and appreciate the varied gifts and talents of their peers—skills that will enable them to relate well in a diverse society.

It should be noted that the integrated ECI model "includes" not only the full range of general education students but also students with all types of special education designations—from mild to severe. However, it departs in a fundamental way from inclusion programs that focus all their efforts on supporting one or two special education students in the general education classroom. The ECI model doesn't just enable a special education student or two (and an aide

or consulting teacher) to join a general education classroom. Instead, it reduces general education class size to allow for the full integration of special education and general education students. Classes are formed in such a way that neither the special educator nor the student with special needs is a "guest" in the general education classroom. The special education-general education teaching team allows students with and without identified special needs to have an opportunity to benefit from the individualized attention. In addition, special needs children are full members of general education classrooms with high expectations and challenging curriculum.

A Work In Progress

The Early Childhood Initiative is a "work in progress" and like any masterpiece-in-the-making it requires hard work, perseverance, patience, and flexibility. Blending the talents, expertise, and philosophies of special educators and general educators calls for advance planning and ongoing support. Developing integrated curricula that supports the most developmentally and emotionally needy child, and at the same time challenges the most intellectually precocious and intuitive child is a truly daunting task. Even if university preservice programs addressed teacher competencies for inclusive education (which they typically do not), teachers still require ongoing professional development supports to help students witn specific special needs succeed. Teachers are learning new ways to involve parents as partners to help children maintain the gains made in the classroom. Finally, coordinators and principals in these school not only need to provide the visionary leadership necessary sustain a schoolwide inclusive philosophy, but they also need to be masterful at pooling their resources to best serve all the children within their building. While the work of the ECI schools is far from complete and there is much still to be learned, teachers, parents, and evaluators are finding significant benefits for children along the way.

Introduction to the Report

The findings of this second-year evaluation of the New York City Early Childhood Initiative echo and lend support to our first year's findings. Because of the extremely high marks given to this initiative by parents and teachers alike, an apt title for this report would have been, "Yes, parents and teachers like it, but how are the children doing?"

It is this basic question that the report addresses through narratives about children in ECI and through a discussion of a number of significant themes that were identified during our development of stories about these children. The themes are offered as working hypotheses about the possibilities and limits of integrative early childhood education in terms of impacts on young children. The themes are based on our observations and data gleaned from two years of work within the schools. They represent "works in progress" that we will explore further in future evaluations of the ECI.

Evaluation Method

Consistent with the principle of individualization that undergirds inclusive education, an evaluation methodology was devised that measures students' growth against their own individualized expectations. A sample of children was selected across ECI classrooms within the four schools. The sample included representative numbers of males and females and students of diverse ethnicity; students from pre-kindergarten through third grade; and equal numbers of regular education and special education students.[1] (See Appendix A for a description of the sample.)

Teachers' expectations or goals for children in academic and social/emotional areas were determined through in-depth interviews with each teaching team. The language that teachers used to describe their expectations and goals often mirrored *The Chancellor's Frameworks for Pre-Kindergarten through Second Grade*. Multiple measures, including ongoing classroom observation and parent and teacher interviews, were used to follow students' progress during the course of the year. In addition, teachers were asked to compile portfolios that included artifacts of student work, running observations by teachers, Primary Language Record observational assessments, and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and IEP progress reports (in the case of children with special needs).[2]

The information collected across all data collection activities was synthesized and observers and interviewers were brought together to build stories, or portraits, of student progress. These portraits were sent to each teaching team for their review.

A validation panel of 11 experts in early childhood education, special education, and bilingual education was enlisted to validate the magnitude of student progress. (Names and areas of expertise of this group are found in Appendix B.) In essence, experts helped answer the question, "How good is good enough?" with regard to student progress. The panel reviewed the student portraits; the results of their review accompanies the portraits of student progress presented in Section III. Appendix C offers a complete description of the evaluation method used to understand student progress.

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[1] Special education classifications include Specialized Instructional Environment (SIE) and Modified Instructional Setting (MIS) labels present in the general proportion that they exist in the population.

[2] No standardized test information was available for pre-K through second grade. Standardized tests were conducted only with the one class of third grade students.

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Presentation of Findings

Evaluation results are presented in three sections. Section I provides a description of children served and the number of children whose special education label changed or who were decertified or referred for certification at the end of the 1994–1995 school year. Section II describes overall themes of the impact generated across all children that were followed during the year. Section III provides the individual portraits of 15 children followed during the year and expert validation panel findings regarding student progress in the initiative.

Section I: Description of Children

A total of 396 children were served in the 19 classrooms across the four Early Childhood Initiative schools during the 1994–1995 school year. Table 1 provides a breakdown of children served by school and grade.

Table 1. Number of Children in ECI Classrooms by School and Grade

	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	Total
PS #15						
general	--	15	16	16	16	63
special	--	6	4	5	6	21
PS #372						
general	12	32	46	21	--	111
special	6	12	17	11	--	46
PS #321						
general	12	18	18	18	—	66
special	6	5	7	6	—	24
PS #150						
general	--	15	15	15	—	45
special	--	6	7	7	—	20
TOTAL						
general	24	80	95	70	16	285
special	12	29	35	29	6	111
TOTAL	396					

Data were collected regarding the movement of students through the special education system during the year. Table 2 depicts this movement of special education and general education students by grade level in and out of the special education system.

Table 2.
Movement of ECI Students in and out of the Special Education System during the 1994-1995 School Year.

	Pre-K	K	1st	2nd	3rd	TOTAL
Decertified	3	1	3			7
Decertified/related service only				1		1
Promoted to next grade; inclusion either at same school or another school	6	25	31	21	4	87
Held over in same grade inclusion			1	1		2
Moved to less restrictive label within inclusion						-
Moved to more restrictive label within inclusion			1			1
Moved out of inclusion to self-contained		1 - SIE III (Parent)	2 (Parent)[1] 1 (Program)	4 (Parent) 2 (program)	2 (parent) 1 (program)	13
General education to students referred to special education		1 - SIE VII (Self-contained) 2 - MIS (Self-contained)	1 - MIS (Self-contained)	1 - RR 1 - SIE VII (Self-contained)	1 - MIS (Self-contained)	7
Moved/unknown		1	1			2
TOTAL[2] General Education Special Education	7 113					

As the table illustrates, eight of the 113 students with special needs served in the 19 ECI classrooms were decertified during the year (seven were decertified and one was decertified and receiving related services only). Three of the twelve students with special needs served across the two ECI pre-kindergarten classrooms (25%) were decertified during the year. While these numbers are far too small to allow for any definitive conclusions, this finding is somewhat encouraging in supporting the claim that early intervention will result in reductions in the overall number of students entering the special education system.

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[1] "Parent" signifies students moved to self-contained special education classrooms at parents request. "Program" signifies students moved to self-contained special education classes at the school's request.

[2] Total number of students served varies slightly due to movement in and out of schools during the course of the year.

Only 2.4% or seven of the general education students enrolled across ECI programs were referred for special education services during the year. However, six of these students came from one of the four schools participating in the ECI. The reasons underlying these referrals are not known.

It is encouraging that 87 of the 113 served (77%) of the ECI students with special needs were in fact promoted to the next grade inclusive classroom. Only two children were held over in the same grade, and in one case, the major reason for the hold over was that the child had joined the class late in the year. Thirteen children (11%) moved out of the ECI classrooms into self-contained special education classrooms. However, five of the 13 children were in bi-lingual ECI classrooms and their revised placement to self-contained classrooms was a result of their parents demanding a mono-lingual instructional program for them. Of the eight remaining special education children, seven came from the same school from which the four general education students noted above were referred for special education services. Again, the lack of background knowledge about these placements and more importantly, the small number of cases involved in these placements make it impossible to draw any firm conclusions regarding these data. This points up the need for ongoing study of students movement in and out of special education programming on a system-wide basis and over time in order to identify any valid patterns resulting from placement of children in diverse general education and/or special education programs.

Section II: Overall Themes Having an Impact on Students in the Early Childhood Initiative

Following children over time across the four ECI schools yielded vast amounts of data about the impact of the program on children. The stories of fifteen of the children followed during the year are unfolded in Section III of this report. However, in addition to individual stories, the collective experiences of the 34 children followed illustrate overarching themes that had an impact on student progress in general. (Figure 1 provides a summary of these themes.)

FIGURE 1
THEMES IMPACTING STUDENT'S PROGRESS

TEAMING
■ Team teaching, when flexible and collaborative, maximized both special needs and general education students' learning opportunities. ■ When effectively integrated within the classroom, special education and general education expertise enhanced the quality of supports that students and parents received.
DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE
■ Child-centered environments, while important in all early learning, were particularly valuable in inclusive settings because they allowed children to learn in their own ways and at their own rates, while encouraging them to take charge of their own learning. ■ Individualized instruction was critical in inclusive classrooms because it provided students with what they needed when they needed it. ■ A climate of positive behavioral guidance helped students respond more maturely toward one another, adults, and difficult situations. ■ In terms of academics, teachers' expectation that all children could learn and succeed "raised the bar" for special needs children's achievement and maintained or raised standards for general education students.

HETEROGENEITY
■ Heterogeneity, by definition, allowed students with special needs to model appropriate social and learning behavior to a greater extent than would be possible in segregated special education classroom environments. ■ In terms of social behavior, teachers expected that all children-both special needs and general education—would respect one another. ■ Both special education and general education children get the opportunity to be the "helper" or "mentor" in ECI classrooms. ■ Heterogeneity teaches tolerance and helps children's understanding and acceptance of diversity. ■ When there are only one or two high-achieving children in a classroom where the remaining students are struggling, there is the risk that those children will have to assume the unreasonable burden of being the model for the entire class. ■ The impact of special education labels was almost nonexistent within the ECI classroom, but administratively labels had a profound impact outside the classroom (e.g., allowing students to receive services, remain in inclusive classrooms).
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
■ Children benefitted when teachers received and made use of ongoing professional development that helped them establish team-taught, developmentally appropriate classrooms.
AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT
■ Authentic assessment impacted on how teachers reflected on and articulated individual children's progress and thus had an indirect impact on students.
PARENT INVOLVEMENT
■ Children benefitted when parents were involved with teachers and in tune with classroom activities. ■ Children and parents mutually benefitted from parents' pride and satisfaction in their childrens' accomplishments.

Synergy between impacts. For clarity of presentation, the themes are discussed here as discrete impacts related to particular components of the Early Childhood Initiative model. However, data indicated that many of the themes and their impacts were inextricably linked

and dependent upon one another. That is, while most closely related to one component, oftentimes impacts could be attributed to a combination of the components of the model. For example, developmentally appropriate classrooms that used positive behavior guidance helped students respond more maturely. However, teachers may not have had the time or resources to use positive behavioral guidance if they were not working as a team (interaction between team teaching and developmentally appropriate practice). Similarly, developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) by definition should foster high expectations for student development and achievement. But high expectations may only be possible as a result of the modeling that occurs in heterogeneous classrooms (interaction between heterogeneity and DAP).

In essence, we believe classrooms are synergistic; that is, what occurs in classrooms and the consequences of the dynamics of life in the classroom are organically related in multiple ways and at multiple levels. In fact, two years of evaluation data strongly suggest that the Early Childhood Initiative is more than just the sum of its parts. This is not to say that other models will not produce similar impacts nor that components of the model should not be massaged and tested to determine their relative merits. **However, it should be noted that the themes and assertions that follow are based on the Early Childhood Initiative model in place in four schools. It does not follow that programs will yield the same types of impacts if all the components of the model are not in place.**

Teaming

In the New York City Early Childhood Initiative, through creative redesign of the traditional class configuration, each child benefits from a general education-special education teaching team and a paraprofessional. In ECI schools, the New York City Board of Education has allowed for the general education class size to be reduced from a student-teacher ratio of 25:1 to 16-18:1. Since special education class sizes are determined by severity of label, a combination of six students with diverse labels—from mild language delay to autism or severe emotional disturbance—allows for a special education teacher and paraprofessional on each teaching team.

Teachers reported numerous personal and professional benefits to the model: continuous collegial professional development, "someone to bounce ideas off of," a buffer for frustrations, and new perspectives on teaching, just to name a few. Interestingly, the benefits to teaming offered by NYC teachers mirror those cited in the Council for Exceptional Children's report of 12 inclusive schools, *Creating Schools for All Our Students: What 12 Schools Have to Say* (CEC, 1995). Data collected across the two years indicated that teaming not only benefitted teachers, it also had a profound impact on student experiences.

- **Team teaching, when flexible and collaborative, maximized both special needs and general education students' learning opportunities.**

Team teaching allowed learning time to be maximized for each student. Lessons were planned in advance and there was a well-established set of rules and classroom routine. However, observations indicated that teachers had the time to explore particular students' ideas and creative suggestions without losing the entire class. In doing so these teachers took advantage of the spontaneous "teachable moment." Even the routine activities of getting coats and passing out supplies were used as teaching opportunities.

Another important finding was that having two teachers and a paraprofessional in the classroom seemed to result in adults giving up a degree of control and allowing students the freedom to take charge of their own learning.

When a child with an emotional or behavioral problem is in a classroom with one teacher and 25 students, many times learning is disrupted for the class until the problem subsides. In addition, if the problem is a behavioral one, the student who is acting out often receives inappropriate attention and reinforcement from other children as well as the teacher during the episode. In the ECI classrooms, the benefits of a caring team approach were dramatically demonstrated when children had emotional or behavioral problems. At such times, there was always a staff member available who could defuse the situation by providing individualized attention to the child in trouble while the other teacher continued to focus the rest of the class on the activity at hand. The ability to respond to both a troubled child and to a larger group had great value in ensuring that all children could receive the support and continued learning that they needed.

There was a certain fluidity that characterized effective teaming. In classrooms where teaming that maximized learning was occurring, teachers had well-orchestrated plans and a shared goal for the results they wanted to accomplish during the lesson or activity. If one teacher was leading, the other was anticipating where the leader was going. The team kept their attention focused on the children and were constantly assessing which children they were reaching and which were "not quite there yet." These teams were able to play off each other and make split-second decisions to change course slightly if they found that they might reach their goal better another way.

One slightly negative impact of teaming noted by teachers was that students, if left unchecked, would sometimes attempt to "play one teacher off the other," as children often do with parents. However, teachers must have managed this behavior adequately because evaluators did not observe any instances of this type of manipulation in classrooms.

In the majority of classrooms where effective teaming was occurring (17 out of 19 classrooms), an uninformed observer could not discern who was the general education teacher and who was the special education teacher. In these cases both teachers had

transcended their traditional roles and were acting as an integrated team. This study very strongly revealed that two teachers sharing a classroom "does not a team make." In the two classrooms where teaming did not operate as intended, there were negative impacts for children.

In one classroom, there was an obvious division of roles that affected children. These teachers didn't work as a team; rather, the special educator typically worked at a table with a small group of special needs children interspersed with one or two "difficult" general education students, while the general education teacher conducted large group activities with the rest of the class. On occasion, a special education child or two would join the class activity for awhile and then returned to the safety of—what seemed to be for all practical purposes—the "special education table" at the back of the room. In this case, the general education teacher did not have the flexibility offered by teaming. Because she was still working with a diverse group (minus a few children in the back of the room), she did not have the time or energy to facilitate truly engaged learning activities for the rest of the class.

These negative impacts were most pronounced for the special needs children. Because of this dichotomous arrangement, the childrens' dependent and inappropriate behavior was continuously reinforced. They were able to "escape" the large group and any learning activities that did not particularly appeal to them by returning to the safety of their separate group. Expectations for these students' success were not high and their behavior mirrored this fact.

In another classroom, the observer noted that the team was divided philosophically on how to work with children. This lack of cohesion among the team caused disagreements between the paraprofessional and the teachers and sent confusing messages to students because they did not know to whom they should listen.

- When effectively integrated within the classroom, special education and general education expertise enhanced the quality of supports that students and parents received.

Observations during the year and teacher reports confirmed that nearly all of the students displayed various levels of "special needs" throughout the year. Just like adults, children—even the high-achieving ones—experienced times during the year where they needed additional support. For example, the high-achieving general education child who had been a model and mentor for other students during the first half of the year needed more teacher attention and help from his peers by mid-year due to escalating problems at home.

In addition, there were a number of factors that affected the special education certification process, including parental advocacy and fallible screening and evaluation processes that do not necessarily consider the whole child in context. For these reasons—more fully documented in Winking and Cahill (1994)—the difference between a student who was labeled

and receiving special education services and another student who was unlabeled was oftentimes unclear to teachers and observers. In 11 of the 19 classrooms, teachers identified general education students without labels who required more of their time and attention than many of their students labeled as special needs. For example, Geraldo, a general education child with chronic medical problems, requires a large portion of the paraprofessional's time. Teachers note, "Geraldo is more perplexing and time consuming than the special education children in our class." As a result, the team has employed numerous strategies offered by the special education professional developer to accelerate Geraldo' progress.

In addition, special education-general education teaming benefits decertified children who may still be in need of some extra or additional attention and assistance from classroom staff. Specifically, ECI kindergartners Peter and Alexia, as well as other previously labeled children, benefit from ongoing supports. For the parents of these children, the end of prekindergarten is seen as an opportunity for a new start. The change from preschool funding to school-age funding requires reassessment by the Committee on Special Education. Parents who do not want their children to enter school with a label try to get them other services to avoid school-age labeling and the stigma it produces. These children who were in special education preschool programs enter kindergarten as general education students. Evaluation evidence indicates that the special education-general education team was very sensitive to the precarious situation of children transitioning out of special education. Teachers were able to provide them with extra supports and attention to avoid relabeling and the costs associated with it.

Finally, parent interviews and teacher reports indicate that a number of general education parents have benefitted from the expertise of the special education teacher. One general education parent commends the team for knowing just what her child needs.

> *The teachers will tell me when they are having a hard time with her. [Though she is general education] I realize that she is not an easy child. They call it an 'attitude'. The special education teacher really knows how to deal with her and she is responding at school and at home.*

Still other parents of general education children reported getting ideas from the special education team teacher about how to work with their children in particular problem areas. Since assistance to parents in and of itself does not result in a direct benefit to children, further investigation is needed to determine exactly what benefits children derive from the help their parents receive.

Generally speaking, teachers confirmed that special education teachers were trained to have a more diagnostic approach to education. For the most part, their preservice training focused more on observation of individual learning styles than the typical general education preservice curriculum. Having a special education teacher on each team allowed all of the children to benefit from an individualized perspective. Over time, however, this perspective

generalized and the team, including the general education teacher, became more attuned to the special learning styles and needs of all the children.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

The New York City Early Childhood Initiative model takes advantage of improved student to teacher ratios to individualize instruction to each child's needs. Consistent with developmentally appropriate practice, classrooms are language-rich environments that emphasize a thematic, interdisciplinary "thinking" curriculum and positive behavior guidance. Data collected over two years indicated that "good" integrated early childhood classrooms require developmentally appropriate practice. DAP is considered by many to be essential to any educational activity involving young children; however, it had particular relevance to implementing inclusive education as defined by the ECI model.

- **Child-centered environments, while important in all early learning, were particularly valuable in inclusive settings because they allowed children to learn in their own ways and at their own rates, while encouraging them to take charge of their own learning.**

According to the position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children found in BredeKamp (1989), a critical characteristic of developmentally appropriate practice is child-centered instruction that encourages children to take charge of their own learning. This type of instruction assumes that teachers have the time and training to orchestrate an effective child-centered environment.

In general, developmentally appropriate practice within ECI classrooms was helpful in allowing all children to take charge of their own learning. Some general education parents contrasted the difference between the level of engaged learning that their children experienced in the ECI and other classrooms. One pre-kindergarten parent made this comparison.

> *I've been through pre-kindergarten recently with my other daughter, so I have something to compare. There was no comparison between the two. In the other pre-k, getting kids involved in learning wasn't even an expectation. I really wasn't thinking about whether or not she was learning—because there were to many other problems in the class. I volunteered so I know—the paints and materials hardly ever came out with only one teacher and one para. I know that she wasn't getting anything out of the class. The teacher seemed to be nurturing—but that was it. But in the ECI pre-kindergarten classroom the learning is thought out in advance. They do projects together that I have noticed. Everything is about "sneaking in" the concepts for kids while they are having fun. They are building those early learnings that are important. Even in pre-k, every project has a combination of*

reading, math, science—cooking has measuring, community trips have map reading and counting ...

In addition, special education children had opportunities to explore their environment, were encouraged to take risks that increased confidence, and took responsibility for their learning in ways that would not have been possible in self-contained special education classrooms. Parents contrasted their children's previous experiences in self-contained special education environments, stating plainly that the same opportunities for growth were not available.

I don't think that the [self-contained] MIS #4 classroom was stimulating enough ... she used to get bored. The inclusion classroom is more challenging.

Last year he was placed in a classroom for MIS #4 children. They put all the language and behavior problem children together. The kids were running all over the place. He was there for a week and I said this kindergarten is not for you; you do not belong here. I figured that my son could make it with general education students.

Developmentally appropriate practice dictates that children need to be involved with a variety of materials and experiences for learning to occur. Teachers noted and parents corroborated that some special needs children did not have opportunities to interact with materials, learn from peers, or explore new learning situations in segregated special education classrooms. This was particularly the case with children with low-incidence disabilities such as autism. One parent comments on the limited opportunities his son had to explore in the self-contained special education classroom.

I visited that classroom, he never have an opportunity to interact with the blocks or the books unless the teacher was directly teaching him something and wanted him to have them for that lesson.

- **Individualized instruction was critical in inclusive classrooms because it provided students with what they needed when they needed it.**

There were numerous instances of individualized instruction documented throughout the year. In ECI, individualization meant meeting a child's personal learning needs and goals through adapting materials, activities, or processes *in the context of the class or small group lesson.* Individualization did *not* mean setting up the types of separate, parallel instructional settings that serve to widen the gap between the student and the rest of the class (e.g., regularly providing separate instruction to a child in a corner of the room).

In all instances, where evaluators saw individualized instruction operating as described above, students were offered positive and customized learning experiences that served to maintain them as part of the class and bring their skills closer to the group as opposed to

isolating them. However, sometimes in the traditional classrooms of 28 or 30 students, teachers are overwhelmed and individualization amounts to giving "busy work" to students who can't keep up. This approach allows the teacher to focus on the class, but widens the gap between the student who can't keep up and his or her peers. These children, whose instructional needs are ignored, are often the children who over time are labeled special education or who drop out of school.

In all ECI classrooms where individualization was used appropriately, observations did not reveal noticeable gaps between children. Even though special education labels assigned to children suggested that the range of cognitive performance and emotional maturity within the class was vast, **all** the students were active members of the class. As one teacher said, "In our classroom their are 'no kids in the corner.'" Except where a disability had noticeable outward physical manifestations (eg., moving slowly because of significant cognitive impairment; ritualistic movements and echolalia in the case of students with autism; or hearing aides in the case of students with hearing impairments) it would be difficult for the casual observer to tell the students with special needs labels from their nonlabeled peers.

- **A climate of positive behavioral guidance helped students respond more maturely toward one another, adults, and difficult situations.**

In most cases, teachers consistently used positive behavioral guidance to shape appropriate behavior. While teacher-directed (externally imposed) behavior contracts were used in a few cases, primary emphasis was placed on helping children to monitor their own behavior and learn to make "the right choices."

Both with individual children and in group settings, teachers were observed talking about choices that children needed to make and the consequences of their behavior on others. Four- and five-year-old children were observed being guided through decision-making processes designed to help them make choices that would protect them, enhance their learning, and help them respect other children. When difficult situations presented themselves to students during the year, teachers often stepped back and asked children questions such as "What do you think you should do?" or "What do you think is the best choice for you now?" In some cases, students were observed using similar language to monitor their own behavior. For example, one boy with emotional problems made a decision to separate himself from the group because, according to him, "it wasn't the best place for him to be at the time." Another preschooler labeled with special needs decided not to sit by a good friend because he knew that together they would get into trouble.
By no means were all children independently monitoring their behavior in all situations. However, teachers' language, modeling, and interactions with children and the environment served to maximize such monitoring behavior. Those children who began learning to monitor their own actions showed a decrease in impulsivity and a heightened sense of respect for themselves and other children.

- **In terms of academics, teachers' expectation that all children could learn and succeed "raised the bar" for special needs children's achievement and maintained or raised standards for general education students.**

The expectation that all children can learn was a clear theme that had an impact on both general education and special education ECI students. Teachers frequently talked about their expectations for the class and the impact those expectations had on students. Interestingly, while expectations for children were "individualized," they were also "open." One teacher spoke for her colleagues when she said:

> *I guess, yes, our expectations are individualized, but I would call them open expectations. These children are so young that we have the luxury of not ruling out anything as possible.*

Throughout numerous interviews, teachers did not talk about putting a cap on students behavior; rather, they focused on the next level at which they were aiming for that child. In fact, teachers did not place a ceiling on growth even in cases of children with more severe disabilities. Teachers were providing many opportunities for speech for one child with autism because they were not ruling out the possibility of spontaneous speech as goal to be attained. In contrast, in self-contained classrooms where all children are nonverbal, such as the one in which this child was previously placed, the focus often moves away from spontaneous speech and toward augmentative communication systems such as communication books and sign language.

One parent of a general education child detected this focus on success in the context of individualized supports and commented:

> *She [the special education teacher] got me interested in the things that she was expecting from the class. They don't have one set of expectations. They have expectations that every child can learn.*

The overwhelming majority of parents of general education students interviewed felt that their expectations for academics were maintained in the ECI classrooms. Over 7 out of 10 parents surveyed (general education and special education) felt that their children had made adequate or better than adequate progress in reading and mathematics. The exception to these finding are the parents of one or two excelling general education children who were concerned that their children might not be challenged enough over time. Although data indicates that expectations for achievement are high in the early grades, this finding needs to be further explored as children move beyond second grade. Multiple performance assessment and standardized measures need to be used to determine the extent to which parents' perceptions of progress are maintained over time and how they compare to children in noninclusive general education classrooms.

Heterogeneity

Depending on the particular model in place in each site, each Early Childhood Initiative classroom included either four students with a mix of mild special needs (language impairment, developmental delay, learning disability, mild emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, etc.) and two students with severe special needs (severe emotional disturbance or autism), or 8 to 10 students with mild special needs. Within the ECI, "heterogeneity" also means ensuring that there is a balance of struggling, average, and excelling students within each classroom. It is this balance that provides *all* children—special education, general education, and those at risk—with models for success.

- **Heterogeneity, by definition, allowed students with special needs to model appropriate social and learning behavior to a greater extent than would be possible in segregated special education classroom environments.**

Observations during the year and numerous illustrations offered by teachers and parents indicate that heterogeneity has had a significant effect on children's experiences in the ECI classrooms. The evaluation revealed that the balance of diversity in the classroom had an impact on the quality of the experiences for both general education and special education students.

All ECI special education teachers who had experience teaching in self-contained special education classrooms felt that working alongside general education peers helped their special education students grow in ways that are not possible in the self-contained classroom. One veteran special education teacher described the impact peer modeling had in his classroom:

> *It has been a great deal for them. They've learned a lot. They've learned how to learn. They are more observant. They are learning how to take clues from their peers. They are better set up to be lifelong learners.*

Many special education students developed strategies that made them less "needy" and "less demanding of one-on-one teacher attention." For example, students with special needs learned to take cues from their classmates in order to know what activity was coming next, to get their materials ready, and to follow instructions for completing assignments. Teachers did not have to continuously remind students to get ready to learn. Because all of the children in the heterogeneous classrooms were expected to follow posted daily schedules (and to contribute to building schedules), students with special needs learned to follow the schedules. In a number of cases, students learned to perform complex tasks and computer learning games by pairing up with a peer or observing another child.

- **In terms of social behavior, teachers expected that all children-both special needs and general education—would respect one another.**

There was an underlying expectation in classrooms regarding respecting others. One teacher who previously taught in self-contained special education classrooms said plainly, "Here we don't accept behaviors that I used to accept in self-contained classrooms."

In the context of class dialogue, teachers and students discussed differences and various ways students—special education and general education—could support one another. For example, "Joey can see what is going on better if he sits up near me" or "Sarah is having a hard day today, so we all have to help her out." There is an expectation that all children, even five- and six-year-olds, are mature enough to handle differences that are explained well. An implicit standard was set up in classrooms that it is okay and natural to ask questions and be curious about children who are different, but it is unacceptable to make fun of or ridicule children. Observations confirmed that teachers expected students to respect one another and students nearly unilaterally rose to that challenge.

- **Both special education and general education children get the opportunity to be the "helper" or "mentor" in ECI classrooms.**

Observations revealed that both special education and general education children served as helpers and mentors depending on the task or activity.

In terms of peer modeling, there were more activities in which excelling or average general education students took the lead and served as models for other children. However, because ECI classrooms do not set up hierarchies among children, all students—even some that outsiders would consider the neediest—had the opportunity to be both leaders and helpers. In the following example taken from an observation, one child's frequently aggressive behavior was rechanneled into leadership through a cooperative learning activity.

> The task is building a dinosaur sculpture. Marcus, a child labeled as severely emotionally disturbed, emerges as the leader of the group. One child is providing pieces of tape for the others who were attaching the paper towel rolls to create the dinosaur body. Marcus is passionate about the task of building the dinosaur model. He knows exactly how he wants to do it. He is directing the other group members. The students in the group saw Marcus's need to be the leader and they were able to let him lead. As the students admire their completed sculpture, Marcus is beaming from ear to ear. The expression on his face is one of complete satisfaction, conveying an attitude of "I really made this work."

In another case, Emily a student with autism who often seems disconnected from the group, is observed locating the right tools and helping a general education child who is having

trouble cutting some twine for an art project. In still another instance, a kindergartner with special needs coaches a general education child through multiple steps in the task of constructing a butterfly.

Teachers reported that they had discovered the fine line between children's healthy mentoring and helping one another and less healthy caretaking that verges on patronization. The latter case is a negative situation for all children involved. Therefore, teachers had to find ways in some situations of promoting helping and mentoring behaviors while also encouraging children to maintain respectful attitudes and behaviors toward one another. They generally succeeded in doing so, and children benefitted from learning themselves the distinction between help and patronization.

For example, observations of one girl in pre-kindergarten and a boy in kindergarten clearly illustrated this important distinction. These children had leadership abilities and found satisfaction in helping. Watching them in cooperative groupings, one could see that they knew how to bring something out in every child in the group, but they did not go over the boundary to caretaking. They enjoyed helping, but not to the extent that it got in the way of their learning. While they were sometimes helpers, they drew the line on helping when it was time to get down to their own work. On multiple occasions, these students were observed saying no to helping in order to work on their own creations and stories. When playing, they would not allow helping relationships to get in the way of their desires to spend time with a variety of friends.

- **Heterogeneity teaches tolerance and helps children's understanding and acceptance of diversity.**

Heterogeneity added a dimension to the learning experience for general education and special education students alike. Children learned to relate to all types of diversity, and they learned to identify with different styles of communication and learning. During one small group lesson, seven children were gathered around a small table. One girl listening to another child chanting repetitive phrase as she worked, said to the observer, "That's her way of talking because she doesn't have the words." She was also quick to add "but she knows lots of other things."

Overwhelmingly, the data indicated that heterogeneity teaches tolerance. There were no incidents cited where students mistreated or did not respect students with differences. Rather, numerous situations were documented where students celebrated together other children's successes—whether small or great. For example, after a nonverbal child showed that she could read names by passing out papers to students in the class, another child exclaimed, "Emily can read" and the rest of the class followed suit. During another celebration, the group joined together to give another child encouragement for making the right choice and removing himself from a situation that could get him into trouble.

- **When there are only one or two high-achieving children in a classroom where the remaining students are struggling, there is the risk that those children will have to assume the unreasonable burden of being the model for the entire class.**

At the beginning of the year, teachers in one classroom felt that because they had a disproportionate amount of students at risk or labeled special education, that one or two children would be left to serve as a model for the entire class. They felt that this situation was not only undesirable because it would place a burden on the excelling general education child, but also because it would result in an absence of peer models for that child. In fact, according to teachers, this particular child could do so much and was so compassionate that they found themselves relying on him too much. Aware of this fact, the teachers tried to implement safeguards to avoid burdening this child and to provide role models for him (e.g, jointly conducting activities with other classrooms where there were higher achieving children). By the end of the year, teachers determined that the child in question had not suffered because of the disproportionate balance in the classroom.

- **The impact of special education labels was almost nonexistent within the ECI classroom, but administratively labels had a profound impact outside the classroom (e.g., allowing students to receive services, remain in inclusive classrooms).**

Ironically, in some ways labels had a profound impact on children and in other ways they made no difference at all. In a very concrete sense, labels made their most obvious impact as gatekeepers; that is, based on labels students accessed and maintained services. Because special education funding follows labels and programs, certain numbers of students with particular labels (in this case, four MIS and two SIE) were necessary to bring in the monies that staff each ECI classroom with two teachers and a paraprofessional.

If a child had a label, he or she could be eligible for (or remain in) one of the ECI inclusive classrooms. On other hand, if a child did not have a label, he or she could not be guaranteed a place in the ECI classrooms. A number of parents of general education children indicated that they wanted their child to continue in the ECI; however, there were not spaces available for all of the children.

In addition, in a number of classrooms, evaluators observed nonlabeled general education students with significant delays and/or who required significant teacher time. One example is Geraldo, a general education child who required more teacher time and special supports than many of the special needs children in the class.

Labeled students also were entitled to busing to ECI classes, no matter how close they lived to school; nonlabeled children were not. From a student perspective, busing also meant missing some class activities. One second grader with special needs confided in an observer

at the end of one day, "I'm a bus kid and bus kids don't get to stay around long enough for choice time."

While labels made a profound difference in accessing services and spaces in ECI classrooms, once students were in the classroom labels, ironically, melted away. Students were part of heterogeneous cooperative learning groups. In most cases, high-achieving and average general education children received as much attention and thought from adults as did special education or struggling general education children.

However, labels resurfaced again in a very intrusive way as teachers discussed the prospect of decertification for individual special needs children. In some children's cases, decertification meant returning to a home district that did not have inclusive programming or a similar child-centered philosophy. Most of all, it meant that the student would no longer be entitled to the supports of the ECI classroom. Since there are no specific dollars for children transitioning out of special education, there was a disincentive to decertify students unless they were performing extremely well. Because of this and a perceived difficulty of reaccessing services if necessary, teachers took a conservative position on decertifying students with special needs.

Professional Development

- **Children benefitted when teachers received and made use of ongoing professional development that helped them establish team-taught, developmentally appropriate classrooms.**

Because this Initiative is new and requires the integration of early childhood education and inclusive special education paradigms, ongoing professional development has been critical to the success of the individual classrooms and programs within the schools. During the 1994–1995 school year, sustained professional development was provided by the Fund staff developer, Primary Language Record (PLR) staff developers, school-based program coordinators, district early childhood staff developers, district special education supervisors, and Superstart Plus family workers. Teachers indicated that in addition to providing learning opportunities, staff developers also served a range of roles such as listener, conflict mediator, substitute teacher, and advocate for particular philosophies (e.g., high expectations, individualization).

The Fund staff developer directed all development activities toward supporting teachers who had teamed up to build inclusive classrooms according to the Fund's Early Childhood Initiative model. These supports included developing individualized staff development plans with staff and coordinators, organizing weekend retreats across schools, grade-level meetings, orientations for new teams, modeling lessons, coordinating and accessing other support resources, and troubleshooting and ongoing informal interactions with teams and

individuals. In addition to the staff development resources provided directly to inclusive classrooms, teachers described a number of staff development opportunities they have accessed beyond Fund professional development and PLR training offered to all staff who were part of the Early Childhood Initiative.

In classrooms where teachers made use of the sustained professional development provided, benefits for children were evident. Some benefits were targeted and directly attributable to specific professional development efforts; others were indirect but more pervasive and far-reaching.

Children with particular special needs benefitted when teachers accessed specific professional development supports. In one case, teachers perplexed by a situation presented by a struggling general education child used information from a learning disabilities professional development workshop to help the child begin to write letters. In other cases, teaching teams worked with behavior management specialists over time to help specific children decrease their impulsivity and increase their ability to function in the class and in the community. In still other cases, teachers reported that they needed to access additional supports to maximize success for children with particular challenges. This was particularly true in the case of students with low-incidence disabilities or unique challenges (e.g, students with autism, severe emotional disturbance, or sensory or neurological impairments.)

While there were a number of instances of individual children benefiting from professional development support accessed by teachers, perhaps more marked is the pervasive impact of sustained professional development on the classroom culture and environment that ultimately affects all children. While Fund and PLR staff developers, program coordinators, and district professional developers each emphasized different strategies, taken together ongoing professional development provided a distinct philosophy for viewing children and facilitating success for all. Positive observation and record-keeping techniques, cooperative grouping, individualization of instruction and positive behavior guidance were just a few of the strategies that supported the inclusive philosophy.

When teachers took advantage of professional development opportunities *and* when coordinators sustained and supported the philosophy underlying professional development efforts, classroom environments emerged that fostered a host of positive benefits for children. These benefits are well documented within the themes described throughout this report. Teachers in these classrooms actively embraced a developmentally appropriate outlook that was apparent in all their interactions with children. Their classrooms were child-centered environments. These teachers facilitated learning, problem solving, and creativity as opposed to "covering material" or "keeping children busy." They approached behavior problems using positive guidance and self-monitoring instead of attempting to externally control children. The spill-over effects for children were increased opportunities: (a) to explore their environments, (b) to take risks and take charge of their own learning, and (c) to monitor their own behavior and develop an internal locus of control.

In classrooms where teachers did not take advantage of professional development or where sustained professional development was not used by the coordinator to create a child-centered culture, students benefitted less. In fact, for these children, opportunities for learning that occur through exploration were decreased. Behavior was controlled through external rewards and punishers, and children were not encouraged to consider the impact of their actions and make their own choices.

Authentic Assessment

Teaching teams use ongoing observational tools, such as the Primary Language Record (CLPE, 1988), with both general education and special needs children. These in-context assessments refocus attention on building on student strengths and individualized instructional strategies that foster success.

- **Authentic assessment impacted on how teachers reflected on and articulated individual children's progress and thus had an indirect impact on students.**

Teachers used the Primary Language Record as an ongoing authentic assessment of student progress over time. Staff developers reported that using the PLR helped teachers sharpen their observation skills and take a more positive and proactive stance toward developing students' literacy processes and skills. NCREL reviews of PLRs for the 34 children studied over the year revealed that the PLR offered teachers a structure for ongoing evaluation and reflection on student progress. It provided a rigor that is not typically present in informal teacher observations. When teachers used the PLR in their interviews with evaluators, it helped them better articulate specific aspects of student progress.

In addition, comparisons of targeted children's PLRs and IEPs revealed that in the area of literacy, the PLR provided more specific information that could be used to improve instruction. The PLR considered language progress in the context of the whole child, whereas the IEP's "Specific Educational Objectives" section reflected a fragmented skills-based orientation. The PLR facilitated teachers viewing the child systematically from where he or she was starting and emphasized positive aspects of a child's behavior that could be used to build success. For example, instead of saying "the child can't read," the PLR focused teachers on what the child did do that could be used to develop reading, (e.g., the child is curious about books, likes to read pictures, orients books and turns pages.) In contrast, the IEP's "Areas for Improvement" typically focused on what the child could not do.

Consistently, teachers stated that children's IEPs, for the most part, were not instructionally relevant. In fact, at least in the instance of developing reading, communication, and writing expectations for children, teachers used the PLR significantly more frequently than the IEP. To the extent that this more positive frame of reference was used to set the expectations that

guided daily instruction for individual students, authentic assessment **did** have an impact on students' experiences.

Parent Involvement

Early Childhood Initiative classrooms are piloting a variety of flexible strategies for getting and maintaining parent involvement as children age up in the program. These include writing celebrations, weekly read-alouds where parents can drop by to read with children, parent breakfasts, evening telephone hours with teachers, and parent interviews designed to help teachers capitalize on parents' knowledge and experience when making instructional decisions.

- **Children benefitted when parents were involved with teachers and in tune with classroom activities.**

The bulk of the evaluation team's energies were necessarily aimed at classrooms. Therefore, it was difficult to detect and document the direct impacts of parent involvement, particularly when they occurred at home or in the community. However, the preponderance of research and common sense tells us that when parents are connected with their children's education, the children benefit substantially.

When parents have an understanding of what is going on in the classroom and the strengths and challenges their children bring to learning, they can better help their children succeed. While parent involvement is important for all children, it was particularly critical in the Early Childhood Initiative. In ECI, home-school teaming was critical to maximizing each child's strengths and establishing a base of successes on which children could build their confidence as learners.

When parents were connected with teachers they learned strategies for coping with behavioral or emotional challenges that occurred at home, and children benefitted from a single, consistent message between home and school. For example, using teachers' modeling of effective strategies, one parent learned how to defuse potential volatile situations at home that occurred when her son did not have the language to communicate his feelings. This mother was thankful for the assistance to which she attributes her son's improved behavior and decreased tantrums at home. In another case, teachers worked with parents to get their child with special needs involved in park district activities in order to increase his confidence and self-esteem. At first, the parents were doubtful that their son could cope in the relatively unstructured environment of a little league team. However, with teachers' urgings, these parents got the child on the team. Since then have been surprised to discover that not only is their son able to survive, but he has also turned out to be strong player and team member.

In the ECI, the impact parents had on their children's academic growth was not limited to merely helping with homework. Parents who were in tune with academic activities going on in school were able to build on and extend students' learning experiences. For parents of a second-grade child, who recently moved to the U.S. from Mexico, that meant getting their daughter additional resources on the Mayan theme the class was studying. This involvement had the added benefit of allowing the family to explore their heritage together. In another case, parents extended their kindergartner's understanding of the community through trips to the Brooklyn Bridge. As a result, this child with special needs was a class leader in building an intricate model of the Brooklyn Bridge, which was the centerpiece of their class theme on community.

Generally speaking when parents were in close communication with teachers, the teachers had richer information for designing and individualizing instruction for children. For example, during PLR interviews, parents sat down with teachers and discussed their children's likes, dislikes, and behavior at home and their hopes and expectations for their children. Because of these interviews, children indirectly benefitted from teachers' heightened understanding of each child as a whole person. As parents informally communicated what was going on at home throughout the year, teachers were able to better understand and deal with children's changing needs, moods, and behaviors.

- **Children and parents mutually benefitted from parents' pride and satisfaction in their children's accomplishments.**

In both surveys and interviews, parents reported an overwhelming level of enthusiasm for the progress that their children were making in the Early Childhood Initiative (see Chesswas and Winking, 1995). The vast majority of parents see their children making adequate, better than adequate, or excellent progress in major academic and social areas.

Particularly in the case of children with identified special needs, parents benefitted from a new confidence in their children's achievements. It is likely that benefits to parents provided less tangible, but highly significant benefits to their children as the parents' passed their increased confidence and enthusiasm on to their children.

For parents, in many cases observing or hearing reports of things that their children could do at school expanded and raised their hopes and expectations. These higher expectations and hopes were then played out in the challenges that parents gave their child at home. Again, this was particularly true in the case of parents of children with special needs, who may have become discouraged by the limits that they and others had consciously or unconsciously placed on their children's potential. Children benefitted as parents felt more comfortable testing the limits and raising their expectations for their child at home and in the community.

One young parent confided in teachers that her son's successes in standing up for himself and "making the right choices" have helped her to recognize the control she has over her own life

and helped her rethink the choices that she has made for herself. In another case, the parent of a child labeled as severely emotionally disturbed was beaming when she reported to teachers a neighbor's comment that her child's behavior in the neighborhood had gone from aggressiveness to outright friendliness—neighbors were commenting to her about the change and it was clear that her son was becoming a source of pride that she could share with others.

Implications Based on Themes

The stories of the 34 children we followed during the year could not all be told in the limited pages of this document. However their experiences collectively illustrate that *all* of them—both special education and general education—benefited in ECI classrooms where teaming, heterogeneity, authentic assessment, developmentally appropriate practice, professional development, and parent partnerships were in place. Ongoing evaluation confirms that full or "ideal" implementation of each of these critical components runs along a continuum. ECI schools and individual classrooms are at different points along this growth continuum. However, this composite of classroom and individual child studies provides strong testimony to the fact that a multitude of things have to happen simultaneously in ECI classrooms—some overt and some behind the scenes—to enhance learning for all:

> Effective ECI classrooms begin with voluntary and carefully matched pairs of special educators and general educators. These teaching teams both receive and contribute to ongoing professional development related to effective instruction, curriculum, assessment, and teaming. Visionary leadership sets a schoolwide tone of high expectations for everyone—children and adults alike. In the classroom, the special teacher and the general education teacher transcend traditional roles and plan together with clear goals in mind. Even though activities or lessons are structured, teachers are able play off each other's strengths and those of the class to take advantage of spontaneous teachable moments as they occur for individual students or groups.
>
> The classroom is a developmentally appropriate learning place that encourages children to explore their environment, try new things, reach out to peers and adults, and take risks in their learning. The presence of two teachers and a paraprofessional in the classroom provides enough adult attention to help students who need additional support take the personal risks that precipitate learning. Increased staffing allows all students (even average and excelling general education students) to benefit from individualized planning that takes into account their unique strengths and challenges. Students' emotional learning is encouraged as teachers use positive behavior guidance to help them begin to be aware of their own behavior, to self-monitor, and to understand how their actions affect others. Teachers' "open" and high expectations encourage success for all children—no matter what developmental or emotional challenges they face. Special needs students are able to learn appropriate social and learning behavior from their general education peers. Both special education and

general education children benefit from an increased understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Cooperative learning activities, coupled with the way teachers single out individual strengths, give all children an opportunity to be the "helper" or mentor at one time or another. In these classrooms, special education labels have almost no practical use, and teachers and peers are more concerned with what a child can do and who a child is, rather than dwelling on his or her deficits. Parents and children mutually benefit from parents' pride and satisfaction in their children's accomplishments.

Although it was evident that there were many benefits to fully implemented ECI classrooms, the fragility or the ease with which the scale could tip away from benefiting children was also apparent in the individual stories and the overall themes of impact. If children are to continue to benefit, teaching teams, school-based coordinators/administrators, and district and Board of Education administrators must be vigilant in attending to the following issues related to each component of the model:

Teaming

Teaching Teams:

- Teaching teams must work together to maximize learning opportunities for all children. If teams lack cohesion or serve to isolate children based on ability or behavior, the intent of integrated education cannot be realized. Teaching teams should continually assess their own practice to ensure that they are not setting up environments or lowered expectations that serve to isolate children. They should work with speech and language therapists, physical therapists, and counselors to ensure that related services are customized to be as effective and integrated as possible for each child.

School-Based Coordinators/Administrators:

- Coordinators should continue to develop procedures for selecting and training *voluntary* teams. Proven selection criteria include: (a) teacher's willingness to trade a degree of autonomy for collegiality in order to "team"; (b) teacher's willingness to teach in an integrated classroom; (c) teacher's "teaming" attitudes, capacities, and competencies; and (d) teacher's respect for the individual serving as his or her partner.

- Coordinators need to actively facilitate productive teaming among teachers to ensure that students derive maximum benefit from team instruction. Facilitation in this context means, at minimum, (a) closely monitoring the progress of teachers in forging their teams, (b) being available for one-to-one or team problem solving should teaming issues arise, and (c) helping teams build internal capacity to effectively integrate their strengths and remediate their weaknesses.

- Since teaming often is not a part of teachers' preservice preparation, procedures should be established that allow successful teams to systematically mentor new teams.

District and Board Administrators:

- Since pretraining and voluntary selection are synonymous with successful teaming, district and board of education administrators should make the necessary allocations in time for hiring and training to occur before the beginning of the school year.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP)

Teaching Teams:

- Using ECI classrooms as kind of a teaching laboratory, teaching teams—with the support of their coordinators—should explore what elements and combinations of elements of developmentally appropriate practice are most fundamental to successful learning in these classrooms. We assume that classrooms in which all elements of developmentally appropriate practice are fully and richly implemented are "good" classrooms. But are there some elements of developmentally appropriate practice that are more crucial than others to effective instruction in integrated classrooms? Which practices are most fundamental to opening up the opportunities for students with specific special needs served in ECI classrooms? The results of this type of practical research should figure into the development of individualized professional development plans for teams and related service staff.

School-Based Coordinators/Administrators:

- Coordinators should continue to support and promote developmentally appropriate environments for young children. As children age up in the Initiative, coordinators need to work with teachers to define a range of appropriate practices and supports for older children such as cooperative learning, positive behavior guidance, and so forth. Together, school staff need to identify methods for blending academic and functional curriculum in ways that challenge excelling students but do not result in tracking for students with special needs who can benefit from functional skills approaches.

Heterogeneity

Teaching Teams:

- The extent to which inclusive environments trigger some nurturing, caretaking, and empathy beyond that which might typically exist in the general education or self-contained special education classroom needs to be further explored. Because of the potential effects on children, teachers need to be constantly aware of the reciprocal roles that children are serving in inclusive classrooms.

- Teaching teams and their coordinators should carefully explore how issues of heterogeneity change as children age up in the Initiative (e.g., Do diverse ranges of students become more problematic or more easily managed? What are effective methods for managing heterogeneity as students age up? What new issues arise?)

School-Based Coordinators/Administrators:

- Coordinators need to continue to develop thoughtful procedures for selecting children and creating and maintaining balanced and manageable heterogeneous classrooms.

- Coordinators need to help teachers access ongoing professional development that emphasizes strategies for appropriately managing heterogeneity and for fostering within all children important leadership and helping skills without engendering dependent caretaking relationships.

District and Board Administrators:

- As increasing numbers of students are identified for inclusive placements, district administrators and Committees on Special Education (CSE) need to work with school-based staff to develop sensible placement procedures that do not allow classrooms to become heterogeneously imbalanced.

- District and Board of Education administrators should ensure that processes are in place to obtain regular feedback from ECI classroom staff about contradictions between policy and best practice within the ECI model. Feedback should be solicited describing how and under what circumstances federal, state and/or district policies for identifying, assessing, and placing special needs children are contradictory to or incompatible with desired outcomes for students in integrated classrooms. For example, to what extent are teachers hesitant to request decertification reevaluation for students because they fear loss of services or difficulty in reaccessing services? This information may be used to lend support for recrafting policies and funding mechanisms that support students' success.

Professional Development

Teaching Teams, School-based Coordinators/Administrators, and District and Board Administrators:

- Professional development is critical to building the types of classroom cultures that facilitate success for children. As the Initiative ages up with children, teachers, school-based coordinators, and district professional developers need to work together to define a sustained program of professional development that supports an inclusive culture. This program should capitalize on the internal expertise that has been built among teachers as well as support a cadre of outside professional development resources. Professional

development capacity should be developed both internally and externally in a variety of areas including implementing developmentally appropriate practice; using the Chancellor's Frameworks to articulate standards that still allow for individualized goals; designing and using authentic assessment; developing teaming strategies; using positive behavior guidance; managing heterogeneity and challenging gifted students; and understanding and maximizing success for students with specific special needs including learning disabilities, autism and other low-incidence handicapping conditions.

Authentic Assessment

Teaching Teams:

- Teachers need to continue to use authentic tools such as the Primary Language Record (PLR) to observe and assess children in educationally and developmentally relevant contexts. Teachers need to work with administrators to find ways to resolve the sometimes contradictory and overlapping purposes and goals of the PLR and the mandated Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

District and Board Administrators:

- District and board of education administrators and Committees on Special Education (CSE) should work with teachers to tap the powerful information source provided by the PLR as a formal part of each child's overall assessment.

Parent Involvement

Teaching Teams:

- Teachers need to continually build and refine their repertoire of tools for working with parents and drawing them into their child's education. This includes working with parents to provide consistent learning supports and positive behavior guidance across school and home.

School-Based Coordinators/Administrators:

- Coordinators and administrators need to work with teachers to educate parents schoolwide about how integrated education works, including how it meets the range of children's needs without holding back excelling and average general education students.

Section III: Portraits of Student Progress

The portraits that follow describe the past year's experiences of 15 children in their respective ECI classrooms. Children were only profiled in classrooms where critical ECI components (team teaching, developmentally appropriate practice, heterogeneity, professional development, alternative assessment, and parent involvement) were apparent and implemented in sufficient measure.

The narrative in these portraits was developed on the basis of extensive information gathered about these children from teacher interviews, parent interviews, classroom observations, interactions with the children themselves, discussions with support staff, and review of documentation of the children's progress such as is found in IEPs, report cards, teacher notes, and authentic assessment records. Information from all of these sources was integrated to tell a story of how these children fared within inclusive classrooms over the year in important domains of learning and development. We hope that in reading these stories, readers will gain a sense of the very real and individual challenges that all the children in these portraits had to confront at one time or another and a sense of the meaningfulness of their successes—both small and great. Each narrative invites readers to draw their own conclusions regarding the magnitude of progress made for each child given their individual strengths and challenges.

In addition, the expert validation sections shed light on the degree of progress made from the perspective of a group of early childhood education and special education experts. Most important, we hope that readers will come to see why each and every child portrayed here is a reminder that all young children—general education and special education—have unique strengths and needs and that given the right environments and opportunities, they will learn and develop in surprisingly creative and individual ways!

BRADLEY

Introduction to Bradley

Bradley's teachers can't get over the progress he has made in such a short time. "He's excellent at putting together patterns," one explains. "When he was asked to put a purple circle in there, he found the purple circle and placed it in the middle. But he couldn't do that four weeks ago. Yesterday he did a rocket ship ... a more advanced pattern. He was able and he said to me, 'Give me a triangle.'"

Bradley entered his inclusive kindergarten class at five and a half years of age. Previously he had been in a preschool program which provided support services for his special needs.

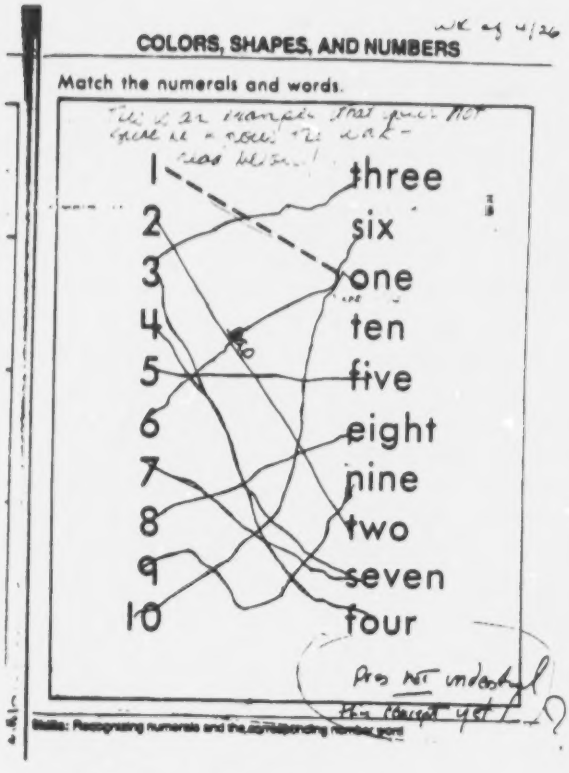
While in preschool, Bradley had been assessed as having low to low-moderate skill levels in a wide variety of areas including fine motor, communication, premath, social, and living skills. However, his certification for special education services was based primarily on his profound speech and language disabilities. Bradley was not verbal until almost four years of age. Since that time, he has had severe problems in articulation and verbal language. These challenges have led to delays in other areas such as socialization and communication. Throughout kindergarten, Bradley received speech and language therapy (three sessions a week for 30 minutes each), occupational therapy (two sessions a week, 30 minutes each), and physical therapy (one session a week for 30 minutes).

Bradley lives at home with his mother and father and his sister. He is basically a healthy child, but he has had a lot of colds, some of which were severe and took considerable time from which to recover. This problem is reflected in his absences: two days the first grading period and 13 days in each of the second and third months, respectively. Bradley has joined a community baseball team and seems to have done well. It appears that he will continue to receive occupational therapy in first grade to help him strengthen his fine motor skills.

Bradley's classroom teachers report that many people believed he had mental retardation when he first entered kindergarten. Indeed, his speech and language teacher admitted that when Bradley first came into the inclusive classroom, his disabilities were so profound that she was literally "scared" for him. However, Bradley has shown himself to be a bright and curious youngster who, according to his teachers, figures many things out on his own. They emphasize that people should not be fooled by his problems with speech. Bradley is frequently able to process ideas and events very quickly and his teachers often found that when they thought he wasn't "getting" something, he proved them wrong. For example, on a class assignment he had completed, a teacher noted: "This was amazing! I sat with a group—Bradley included. I explained the concept of opposites. Bradley just looked as though he didn't understand. Then he took his pencil and did the entire page."

Bradley's parents were surprised by his abilities as well. In the work sample shown below, Bradley's dad initially wrote a note to the teachers saying that Bradley did not yet understand the concepts involved in the homework assignment. Later, the father writes a second note stating that after studying the task awhile, Bradley did, in fact, successfully complete the assignment!

Despite his communication challenges, Bradley is a very friendly and even affectionate child who demonstrates a flair for leadership (at the end of the school year, he was leading morning class meetings). One teacher aptly describes him as "the class ambassador—everyone loves Bradley!" According to his teachers, Bradley strides through the halls of school with a bright, sunny smile on his face, waving at everyone, adults and children alike. Most of the school staff know him upon sight.


COLORS, SHAPES, AND NUMBERS

Match the numerals and words.

1	three
2	six
3	one
4	ten
5	five
6	eight
7	nine
8	two
9	seven
10	four

Sample of Bradley's Completed Homework

Socialization and Relating to Self and Others

When Bradley entered kindergarten, his speech almost unintelligible. He would make sounds but they were often spoken so rapidly with so many omitted phonemes and words that other people, including classmates, could not understand him. Because Bradley could not make his feelings, needs, or wants understandable to others, he would quickly become frustrated, which led, in turn, to loud and intense crying. One of the teachers noted that "Bradley's crying is very frightening because his face gets beet red and the tears come pouring out."

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The other teacher described the following typical example:

> Bradley would be painting next to someone in art. We would have on the table one paint brush in each color because they are going to take turns. Bradley would want orange, would not be able to express "I want orange" to anybody. He'd try to grab it out of a child's hand. They would say "No! I'm using it!" Bradley would cry inconsolably.

Over the course of this year, Bradley's ability to express himself has developed significantly. He has grown to be much more verbal about his feelings and his needs. As one of his teachers noted:

> Now when he is playing or painting with other children, he is talking. He can now put words together and express himself—he is not quite at the point of being able to have a running dialogue, but he can get a message across and he can communicate with other people.

Bradley's developing verbal skills also helped him develop his self-monitoring and self-management skills. He had become so used to being frustrated by his inability to communicate that he would very quickly "lose it" and respond to frustration with crying and flailing arms. By the end of the school year, he might stamp his foot when frustrated, but he would also verbalize to some extent his distress before it overwhelmed him. Indeed, the teachers say that by the end of school, Bradley could control his outbursts long enough for them to intervene and assist him in working through the problem.

For example, last February an NCREL evaluator observed the following incident: Bradley had a conflict with a classmate over a spinning top. Bradley grabbed it and both boys began to fuss. The teacher took the top and asked Bradley where he got it from. He told her from the home of his speech teacher (Bradley probably meant office or classroom). The teacher said that she would ask the speech teacher when she came into class to whom she had given the top. Bradley simply nodded and sat down quietly again to play. Several months earlier, Bradley would have acted out rather than talked through this incident.

Bradley's greater self-control has also helped him to follow classroom rules and procedures better. His outbursts often occurred when he disagreed or felt he needed to depart from a standard rule or rule-governed activity. For example, in the early months of school, Bradley would always sit next to the child whom he considered to be his best friend in the class, Lindsay. Any attempt to place another child by this friend would reduce Bradley to sobbing. By spring, however, Bradley had become sufficiently flexible so that during a bus trip, when the teachers had another child sit next to Lindsay, he expressed disappointment but quietly went to his assigned seat. He accepted the situation so gracefully that the teacher allowed him to sit next to his friend during a different portion of the trip.

The fact that Bradley has become more verbal during the school year and has reduced his outbursts both in number and intensity has made him greatly more approachable. Bradley came into kindergarten and has remained a fairly sociable child. Indeed, his desire to give and receive affection leads him to frequently hug and kiss the other children. However, during the first months of school, his difficulties with communication and his outbursts resulted in the other children isolating him somewhat. However, over the year, his relations with other children improved dramatically. He has one best friend in the class but now plays with a number of other children.

During a spring parent-teacher conference, Bradley's parents told his teachers that neighbors have been asking them, "What is happening to Bradley?" Indeed, the parents said that Bradley has made such "incredible leaps" in being able to answer questions and in joining in conversations that he is making friends all over his neighborhood for the first time.

Bradley's teachers believe that his challenges have led his parents and other significant persons to overprotect him from responsibilities and, thus, consequences. They have encouraged his parents to "let go" more and to expect more of Bradley. They believe this is happening as Bradley's parents see his growth and developing capacities. One of the teachers even encouraged Bradley's father to sign him up on a community baseball league. His father did so and in May, the teacher reported that Bradley was playing and had developed into a great runner for his team!

Interestingly, Bradley's teachers believe that despite the challenges confronting him, he entered kindergarten with a great deal of self-assurance and confidence. This confidence no doubt assisted Bradley in his efforts to better relate to peers and adults and to find his voice in communicating with them.

Communication, Reading, and Writing

When Bradley first came into kindergarten, he had difficulty making important linguistic distinctions. For example, he called all four-legged animals "dog." Or he often named objects by referring only to their color, e.g., he would call a chair a "brown" or the blackboard a "green." Bradley had been calling all rooms and objects typically found in a house by the name of "house." The speech and language teacher explained that this reflected Bradley's difficulty in relating the parts to the whole. Using construction paper and poster board, she developed a model of a house with all of the rooms open (much like a one-dimensional doll house). During speech and language sessions, she would work with Bradley as he added things to the rooms in his house. In this way, he began to work with more specific concepts such as bedroom, kitchen, dresser in bedroom, oven in kitchen, and so on. By the end of the year, the teacher noted that although Bradley still has difficulty with verbalization and with distinctions, he had made great improvement. Bradley's classroom teachers also confirm that over the course of the year, his ability to verbalize and to distinguish among concepts had developed significantly.

Though Bradley has a serious articulation issue, his verbal receptive skills—the ability to hear, process, and comprehend what is said to him—are very good, although it took some time for this to become evident. His teachers candidly admit that Bradley has continued to surprise them all year. Because of his limited verbal feedback, they would think that he did not understand a set of instructions or the point of a lesson—a story, for example. However, time and again, Bradley would suddenly respond to the instructions and/or act out the story after it was read. One teacher offered an example: One day in school, the class moved from one topic to talking about the game of baseball. Bradley immediately yelled out, "Angels in the outfield." *Angels in the Outfield* is a movie Bradley had seen about baseball and he was very clearly making the connection.

The classroom teachers and the speech and language teacher also noted that early in the year, Bradley could not respond to "wh" questions, e.g., what? why? and where? By the end of the year, he was answering these questions verbally, although not always as fully as the questioner might have wanted.

Bradley's problems with communication have already been described in detail. He came into kindergarten unable to communicate with others due to his articulation difficulties. However, with the improvements he has made in verbalization and speech this past school year, he has experienced a corresponding confidence and ability in communicating with others.

His classroom teachers noticed early in the year that part of Bradley's articulation problem stemmed from his rushing attempts to form and use words. He would often get excited and try to rush what he wanted to say. The teachers have worked with him on feeling comfortable about slowing down and taking time with his speech. By the end of the year, particularly with prompting, Bradley was making an active effort to slow down before he began to speak. However, the teachers agree that he will need to continue working on this issue, just as he will have to continue working on articulation in general, throughout the summer and into first grade.

Once Bradley had begun to verbalize more, his teachers began working with him to make more complete sentences and, more important, to be more expressive in his language, e.g., "I am *sad*. I am *mad*." In particular, the teachers want Bradley to extend his ability to talk about his frustration and his feelings when he is upset. By May, Bradley had begun using pronouns such as "I" and "me" more in sentences. While he had some success in using more expressive language, his teachers said he is still delayed in his expressive capabilities and must continue to focus on this area of communication.

During his kindergarten year, Bradley demonstrated real enjoyment in listening to stories. However, the teachers were not sure if he was always hearing the entire story being read. He would sit quietly on the rug, but sometimes his attention would seem to wander away from the story. Nevertheless, he could often talk about the story later. By the end of the year, the teachers believed that Bradley had become more involved in reading activities.

When asked if Bradley knows the letters of the alphabet yet, the teachers were unsure. He had learned by sight the letters that the class had worked on and when they would randomly point to a letter and ask the class to read it, Bradley could usually provide the correct answer.

Before year end, Bradley was holding a book correctly and understood the sequence of pages. He does attempt to "read" by interpreting the pictures in the book. Additionally, the teachers noted that Bradley had become active in "reading" the class schedule, print around the classroom, and pictures on display.

In November, Bradley's teacher described him as "an emergent reader" who "enjoys listening to a story" and who "uses pictures to identify the story line." Indeed, working with a computer reading program, Bradley began reading symbols fairly quickly and using them in sequence to reflect a story line.

The following table reflects informal assessment records of Bradley's reading at two timepoints—December 1994 and June 1995. They provide a feel for Bradley's development in reading readiness.

Date	December 1994	June 1995
Title of book or text	I Am	Thomas the Tank
Known or Unknown text?	Known	Known
Overall impression of child's reading	Held the book upside down, unfocused	Held the book the correct way—was more focused
Strategies child used when reading aloud	Teacher showed him how to hold the book. Teacher pointed to pictures and he was able to identify some of them.	He imitated the teachers' reading. He was difficult to understand, but he did look and point and say something.
Child's response to the book/text	He understood when I said, "What's this?" and he responded	He knew this book so he read the book from personal experience.
What this sample shows about the child's development as a reader	Bradley needs a lot of prompting and help with books at this time.	Bradley showed growth in reading readiness —he knew how to hold the book and he tried to read.

In April, Bradley's teacher noted that he was not yet able to put letters together when he heard them sounded together. For example, if the teacher said "Ba, ba," Bradley had not yet grasped that you use a "B" and an "A" to make this sound. However, late this year, he pulled one of his surprises when the class was doing a worksheet that required students to count the number of objects— e.g., balls and fishes—and circle the correct number written in

alphanumeric form, i.e., five instead of 5. Bradley counted out his objects and correctly circled the word "five." When the teacher asked him how he knew this word was the right one, Bradley quickly responded, "Five" and made an "F" sound.

At the kindergarten level last year, the teachers focused a great deal on prewriting skills, e.g., expressing oneself through drawing, using drawings to tell a story, and working in a journal. Additionally, the teachers also introduced the concept of writing by focusing on individual letters and numbers and by helping the children learn to write their own names.

Bradley's writing ability is affected by delays in his fine motor skills. He is able to grasp a thick pencil satisfactorily, but he has difficulty maneuvering writing implements.

Early in the year, the teachers assisted Bradley in writing by forming letters and numbers with dots and dashes, which Bradley would then trace. In the spring, one of the teachers attended a workshop and picked up an idea about helping young children to form letters and numbers by using a yellow highliter. She began to use this strategy with Bradley. He was more responsive to the yellow highliter than he had been to the dots and dashes and very quickly improved his tracing control and skill. The teachers also had him copy the highlighted letters/numbers above the line. He steadily improved in his ability. Bradley had entered kindergarten not knowing how to write his name. However, working with the yellow highliter, he was able to write his full name before school let out in June.

Work samples in Bradley's portfolio reflected the improvement in his writing skills over the year. Later samples demonstrate that he was clearly writing his name. Also, later work shows Bradley's writing to be firmer and more controlled and the letters or numbers to be better formed, e.g., better circles and loops.

Math and Numeracy

When Bradley first entered kindergarten, he was totally unresponsive to requests to identify or sort by shapes. By November, the situation had changed radically. He had begun demonstrating an ability to identify and sort by both color and shapes, by same and different, and by bigger and smaller. Bradley had also learned by the end of the year the terms, meanings, and use of spatial relationships such as below, over, above, and under. The teachers were very surprised but think that Bradley continues to have an amazing amount of knowledge that he has just begun to find out how to communicate.

From early on, Bradley liked patterning activities and developing pictures with patterning kits. He began working in one-on-one situations with a classroom staff person to build simple pictures, but very quickly moved to more difficult kits and patterns.

In the beginning of the year, Bradley could rote count up to three. He could not count with one-to-one correspondence at all. However, as the year passed, Bradley learned to rote

count up to at least 10 and learned how to count with one-to-one correspondence up to at least 3. Some of the worksheets he completed independently later in the year indicate his ability to correctly circle the number corresponding to the number of objects in pictures. Additionally, teachers found Bradley correcting his own addition mistakes.

Summary

Aside from Bradley's articulation and verbalization challenges, he is a relatively typical kindergartner—excelling in some areas, average in others, and slightly below average in a few areas. As one teacher pointed out, because children are so young in kindergarten and moving along their own paths of growth, it is impossible to "peg them" for very long with any accuracy. At any rate, the teachers were "delighted" with Bradley's progress and growth this past year, particularly his progress in confronting his communication and subsequent socioemotional challenges. They expect Bradley to have an exciting first grade experience and see no reason to think he won't as long as he continues to receive the individualized support and assistance he received in his inclusive kindergarten classroom.

JACK

Introduction to Jack

Jack is a solid boy, and even though they are the same age, he seems large compared to his 8-year-old classmates. Like many other children in his class, he likes to play Sega Genesis and watch cartoons.

Jack came to the integrated first-grade classroom in the middle of last year. Prior to that he was placed in a separate classroom for children with severe emotional disturbance (SIE VII in the New York City special education system). This class was made up of Jack and five other children who were labeled severely emotionally disturbed. The classroom was staffed with one teacher and one paraprofessional.

This year, in the integrated second-grade class, Jack receives individual counseling once a week and group counseling with two other children once a week. He has only missed one day of school during the year. Teachers and school therapists have tried to encourage Jack's mother and boyfriend to seek private counseling in addition to the school counseling services, but she has not followed up on the recommendation. Jack's mother reports that therapists in the past have made her feel responsible for Jack's emotional problems, saying that she spoiled him. She reads with Jack daily and works with him to improve his writing. At times, however, his mother seems embarrassed by Jack's behavior and he senses this.

When Jack joined the class, his academic skills were very low, but it was his social and emotional behavior that concerned teachers the most. Jack was often difficult to be with and was not particularly attractive to other children. He would invade other children's space and disrupt their activities. Physically his clothes were always disheveled—his shoes untied and flopping off or shirt untucked and only partially buttoned. He never had his book bag or materials, according to teachers. He was never really quite together. During a fall interview, his mother remarked that he was lazy at home and that she had a hard time getting him to pick up his things.

General Progress

Jack has come a long way academically, and teachers celebrate with him as he gains new confidence with each academic success. Teachers have found that their best access to improving Jack's social behavior has been through his academic successes. During academic

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group work they have seen great improvements in Jack's self-esteem. This new confidence in his academic skills allows Jack to be helpful and to compromise in work groups:

> In reading group Jack has many more strategies for how to get the group started than his peers. He begins by categorizing the books in the basket. Then he turns to Janie who is sitting next to him and says, "Lets both read together." He chooses a book and says, "Let's read this." Julie doesn't go along with his suggestion and chooses a different book. Jack looks at her choice and says, "Great." The two congenially negotiated until they found an entire series of books to read. They read together and then each read one book, which they swapped when they were finished.

> In unstructured play situations, however, Jack's social behavior, for the most part, remains inconsistent, impulsive, and immature. In the beginning of the year, he had a difficult time focusing and spent so much instructional time wandering off that it was hard for him to accomplish anything. An observer and teacher describe the meandering route that Jack took before getting down to a writing assignment.

Jack wandered to the tulips on the windowsill in the classrooms. The teacher asked what he was doing. Jack said he was getting a pencil. He then moved slowly to the turtle tank, eyed the creatures and then stopped at the pencil basket. After carefully looking though the pencils, Jack chose one. Then he moved over to guinea pig cage and on to the sink area, where he began to talk to the children standing nearby. They chased him away. Jack stopped to look at what the kids at the next table were doing. Finally he went over to the magnetized name cards and began moving them around. He was still playing with the magnets when the classroom paraprofessional sent him to his seat. Nearly five minutes had elapsed.

Teachers say that this procrastinating behavior was typical for Jack early in the year. However, as he gained confidence in his academic skills, his wandering decreased significantly. He now may detour only once to look at a subway map before moving on to his seat. Teachers also describe Jack as more inner directed and connected to teachers than he was mid-year. This connectedness, however, has not, for the most part, transferred to his peers.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

One does not have to watch Jack for long to see that he is not necessarily aware of the affect he and his actions have on other kids. Jack is a good natured boy who desperately wants friends, but his clumsy behaviors, lack of awareness, and impulsivity get in the way. During a cafeteria incident he repeatedly grabbed other kids, hugged them roughly, and then proceeded to sprawl across the lunch table. While writing in his journal, he would say each letter loudly, disturbing other students who were working quietly. At the water table with a

small group, he would awkwardly spill the water and dip his sleeves in handwashing water and inadvertently splash his classmates. While Jack seemed oblivious to his actions, teachers report that classmates saw his behavior as immature.

In the beginning of the year, his mother reported that Jack had to have his own way with friends or he wouldn't play. Out on the playground, some boys complained that Jack wouldn't let them play football "right," that he wanted to make up his own rules, and that he was jumping on them and not letting them go.

In a conversation with Jack in February, he said that he doesn't have any friends in the classroom. "They are not my friends, they don't ever play with me." He talked about a time when kids became interested in playing a game that he had made up, but remarked that they soon quit and would not play with him anymore.

Paradoxically, this same boy whose behavior can be annoying to his classmates is gentle, caring, and compassionate. Although he doesn't always understand the effect of his own behavior, he is very empathetic on another level. Jack is often overheard praising other children, saying "Good job," when someone does well, asking what is wrong when a child is in pain, or helping classmates up when they fall down.

Teachers grappled with how to best address Jacks' inappropriate and impulsive social behavior throughout the year. For them it was a dilemma—Jack clearly wanted to be liked, but continually acted in ways that made it difficult for other children to accept him. They experimented with various behavior change contracts and consulted with psychologists about the possibility that neurological problems may be at the root of Jack's impulsive behavior. There was no conclusive evidence of neurological problems and the behavior contracts were not useful in produced sustained changes in Jack's behavior.

While his social behavior is remains inconsistent, teachers report that he has made some progress. By the end of the year he had become more self-aware and was also paying more attention to appropriate behavior by his peers, seeing how they do things. He was better able to express himself verbally and calmly retell a situation and the role he played in it. He is more likely to recognize his moods and let teachers know when he is having a bad day. Teachers see this as an early step to monitoring and controlling his own behavior. Although teachers feel that Jack is more aware now, he still has trouble stopping himself when he is out of line. Teachers report that sometimes it seems as if he can't quit embarrassing himself even though he realizes it is happening. When Jack backs himself into a corner in social situations, often his behavior escalates until he is removed from the activity.

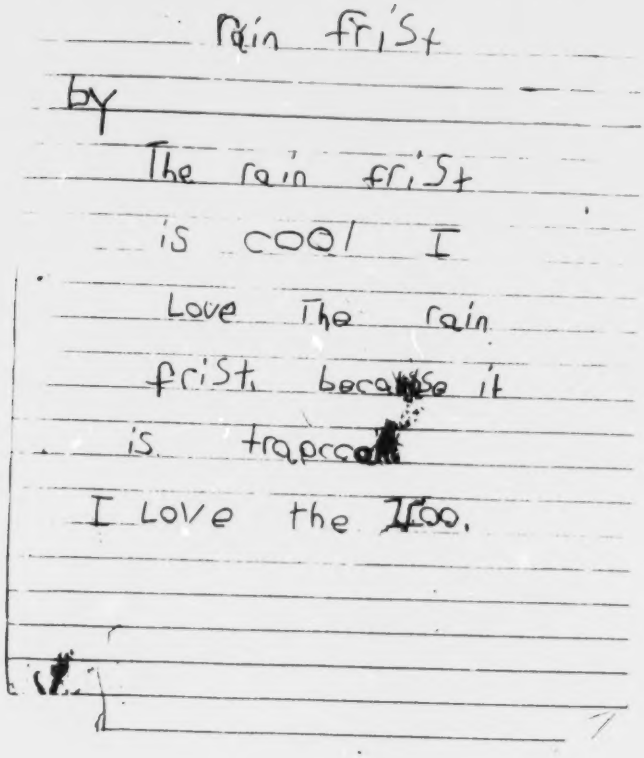
Communicating, Reading, and Writing

In the beginning of the year Jack rarely moved into any activity without spending several minutes saying that he couldn't do it—no matter what the task is—because he is too "stupid."

He needed a lot of initial guidance and coaxing to get him to approach new tasks. By spring, Jack had made exciting leaps in his work behavior. He is now able to work independently for long periods of time and concentrate on a task such as writing and revising. Jack began the year only able to read very simple books. He would only approach books with a picture and no more than eight words on a page—the type of books early first graders typically read. He would vacillate between complaining that all the books in the reading center baskets were too easy and too hard. His mother reported working with Jack at home to improve his reading. By year end he had begun to see himself as a reader. Jack now independently reads and understands mid-year second-grade readers and chapter books. His report card shows that he moved from "needs improvement" to "good" in understanding what he is reading. What is most impressive is the new eagerness within him. He will now attempt new books. For example, at center time, Jack picks up *Pepre the Lamplighter,* a challenging book for any second grader. He seems sure of himself at first; however, when he comes up against some Italian names, he gives up. His fragile sense of self-confidence still gets in the way at times.

At the beginning of the year Jack lacked strategies to help him succeed, such as using context clues to attack print. Informal reading assessments reveal that Jack has now developed a repertoire of reading strategies. For example, he often sounds out or breaks words apart and independently rereads sentences, paragraphs, or entire pages until they makes sense to him. If he is having a bad day, he may use his strategies unevenly; for example, he can still become panicked at the length of a word and forget his strategy.

In the fall, Jack was not writing at all. During individual journal time he would scribble all over a page and say that he was making a design. During group writing processes his partners became distressed because he scribbled all over the group product, sometimes pressing so hard that he made holes in the paper. In the first few months teachers spent their time working on writing mechanics with Jack. Now he is connecting prior experiences with his reading and expressing these connections on paper. Although he sometimes still protests that he doesn't remember anything, he is able to sit down and write about his experiences. During one assignment, he connected the story *Puddle Trouble with Midge* with a trip that his family took to 5th avenue, and describes it vividly in his writing. In a poem, Jack talks about a trip to the Central Park Zoo and describes his feelings about the rain forest:



[Teacher's Comment: A poem about the rain forest written by Jack after a trip to the Central Park Zoo Rain Forest Exhibit.]

Mathematics and Numeracy

Jack's math progress has mirrored his development in reading and writing. He came into the class at kindergarten level. But perhaps more disturbing than his low-level skills, was his attitude toward himself as a learner. Again, he began each math task with his self-defeating ritual. "I can't do math." After several minutes he would open the book, scan the page, and slam the book shut refusing to go further. After a lot of work and consistency, he is now on grade level with his peers in math. He has developed some strategies to help him solve problems such as making a number line for himself. Jack is now working with classmates on completing two-digit subtraction with trading.

Jack is moving to the third-grade classroom with his peers. Teachers believe that in many areas Jack now sees himself as a successful learner. He is beginning to become aware of how his behavior affects others and talk problems through with teachers. While Jack has a long way to go, it is the teachers' hope that his growing confidence in his academic skills will continue to make him more at ease with himself in social situations.

ROSA

Introduction to Rosa

Rosa's teachers have expressed a genuine affection for her and repeatedly noted that she was a "pleasure" and a "delight" to have in the class. One of the teachers remarked that Rosa has a special awareness of the world about her that is quite unique. Part of this awareness is an uncanny connectedness to life and to "the present" and Rosa's sense of what is going on around her. Even when unable to verbally communicate this awareness, she is expressive in other ways, e.g., gesturing, facial expressions, body language.

Rosa entered the second-grade inclusion class from a self-contained special education classroom. She is a healthy child with no chronic health problems. Aside from the minor delays she has in finger movements and her grasping reflex, she is an active, healthy eight-year-old. Rosa has been assessed as having "mild retardation" and significant speech delays. During the 1994-1995 school year, Rosa received speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and counseling services.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

One of the interesting aspects of Rosa is the way in which she demonstrated over the year a fair amount of confidence in some areas and reticence in others. For example, at the beginning of the year, Rosa had some fairly typical problems separating from her mother, e.g., crying and clinging. However, before long, she had effectively integrated into the classroom routines and culture. Like the other children, she assumed responsibility for putting away her things and organizing her supplies. After getting into the swing of things, Rosa appeared comfortable in her surroundings and relations with her teachers.

Enhancing Rosa's self-image has been a major counseling objective included in her IEP as of June 1994. Rosa's need to strengthen her confidence and self-esteem was reflected this year in her negative reactions as she compared her school work with that of other students. However, by the end of the year, the teachers report that Rosa did, in fact, appear to be more confident and less worried by the differences. This confidence was demonstrated by her willingness to finish work and to have it displayed with other children's in and outside of class. Still, her teachers noted that they would like to see Rosa strengthen her self-image and self-confidence even further. They believed that helping her to do so should remain a focus when she enters third grade.

Rosa got along well with her classmates during the year. Although her teachers found her to be reserved in relating to other children in the class, she had made friends as of mid-year with a small group of children and had developed a special best friend in Mary. Rosa

enjoyed playing with these children and seemed at ease in interacting with them. The teachers reported that Rosa was much less comfortable working or playing in large groups.

Rosa's need for a smaller group to provide a "comfort zone" is also evident in the way she reacts to the instructional groups in which she participates. She tends to withdraw and lose focus in whatever activity is occurring. One of her June IEP objectives was to work in larger groups and remain engaged in lessons. Teachers report that some progress was made in this area; however, Rosa is still far more comfortable and, consequently, far more attentive in small rather than large groups. The teachers suggest that this should remain an area in which Rosa receives support and attention over the summer and as she transitions into third grade.

Rosa's IEP goals indicate a need to strengthen her skills in playing games with other children. The objectives indicated that socially, Rosa needed to work on being able to remain engaged in a game for longer periods without becoming distracted and to be able to understand better the rules associated with "turn taking" and to be more patient in awaiting her own turn. A February 1995 update of her IEP noted that Rosa had mastered these skills.

Rosa was often paired with Mary, who frequently served as a "tutor, assistant, and mentor" in learning and play activities. The computer teacher noted that she often paired Mary and Rosa together since they have a "mother-daughter" type of relationship. However, this relationship raises an issue that Rosa's classroom teachers have faced over the year in encouraging Rosa's social development. Although Rosa gets along well with other students, she tends to be rather passive, only rarely initiating an activity. The teachers said that, as part of building her self-confidence over the year, they would like to see Rosa begin to relate to her classmates better as peers. However, although Rosa's communication skills did improve during the year, there does not appear to have been a significant change in her predisposition or ability to become more assertive.

Communicating, Reading and Writing

Rosa made some important progress over the year in developing her cognitive-linguistic capacities and skills. This progress was very visible in Rosa's growing ability to apply cognitive-linguistic distinctions in interpreting the world around her.

In the June 1994 IEP, a major goal for Rosa was to develop her comprehension of temporal sequence. Rosa was showing signs of lacking a concept of time as a sequential flow of events. The classroom teachers and the speech and language teacher indicated that Rosa has demonstrated during the year multiple ways in which her understanding of time and its relation to everyday life has expanded and deepened. Thus, for example, in November, teacher notes describe Rosa pointing to a photograph of a former classmate, identifying her by name, and then asking if the child had gone to a new school (which she had). The teachers suggested that this may have reflected that Rosa was recalling prior events and that

she was placing past events in a temporal sequence—a connection they were not sure she would have or could have made upon first entering second grade.

Also, at the beginning of the school year, Rosa was not demonstrating much awareness of the temporal sequencing of the days of the week. The speech and language teacher worked with classroom teachers to help Rosa use a classroom schedule. The schedule identified the days of the week as well as the times during individual days at which certain activities would occur. By mid-year, Rosa was able to refer to the schedule and determine where in the schedule the class was at that particular time. She was then able to project what would happen next. She'd accurately say to the teachers, "Project time next?" referring to the time reserved for students' choice of project activities. Finally, Rosa very quickly realized that Fridays are proceeded by Saturdays and Sundays, days when she would not be attending school. She would ask her teachers, "No school tomorrow?" with disappointment.

Another challenge for Rosa over this year has been the strengthening of her "labeling" skills. Her speech and language teacher told evaluators that Rosa entered second grade demonstrating a strong tendency to overgeneralize concepts—for example, anything someone drank out of became a "cup" for Rosa. She could not make distinctions between cups, glasses, or mugs.

Her teachers also noted that Rosa has a "thing for shoes—her own shoes, other kids' shoes, anyone's shoes." She loves shoes and came into second grade continually trying to take her or someone else's shoes off to examine them. The teachers found many ways to use Rosa's fascination to engage her in and reinforce learning opportunities. Shoes have helped her learn about temporal sequencing—the teachers have helped Rosa understand that there are appropriate times (e.g., choice time) when she can play with shoes and inappropriate times, (e.g., instructional time). The teacher notes indicated that while working with Rosa on the concepts of "same" and "different," a teacher and Rosa began going through the dress-up shoes, pointing out which shoes might be similar and which different. At mid-year, classroom teachers noted that while Rosa was still fascinated with shoes, she had developed greater control over the impulse to play with them during inappropriate times. This was in many ways a major accomplishment for Rosa, which helped her blend better into the class.

While Rosa clearly made significant progress in communication, her classroom teachers and speech and language teacher believe that this area will remain a major challenge for her as she moves on to third grade. The challenge is made more difficult for Rosa because her parents speak only Spanish at home and, thus, modeling complete sentences, in English at least, poses a problem. However, Rosa will be attending summer school so teachers hope that language and communication will continue to be a targeted area of support for her over the summer vacation and into third grade.

Upon entering second grade in the fall of 1994, Rosa had been assessed as having a "moderate language impairment as evidenced by difficulties in auditory comprehension." Additionally, IEP notes state that Rosa frequently spoke telegraphically in phrases or

sentence fragments. She tended to omit conjunctions, prepositions, and other connecting words in her speech. Indeed, the objectives included under communication arts in her June '94 IEP consisted of:

- Learning how to rephrase incomplete sentences based upon teacher's modeling of complete sentences.
- Improving use of pronouns such as "I" and "we" upon prompts and modeling from teachers.
- Beginning to spontaneously use pronouns such as "I" and "we" to make more complete sentences.

By January 1995, teacher notes and interviews indicate that Rosa was more frequently using fuller and less telegraphic sentences and, with assistance and prompts, was more frequently using personal pronouns in more complete sentences. Indeed, in January a teacher's note records Rosa's first spontaneous use of "I" in a sentence: Rosa said, "I want the cup" to a classmate.

In February 1995, the teachers noted in Rosa's IEP that she had mastered the objective of rephrasing, after teacher modeling and prompts, incomplete sentences. In May, the teachers told evaluators that Rosa had made fair progress in her verbalization and speech skills. On the other hand, Rosa was still struggling with independent use of complete sentences.

Though Rosa's speech remained a challenge for her over the year, she did become increasingly adept at relaying her needs and wants through gestures and body language. When asked if they believed Rosa had any hesitancy about communicating her feelings, teachers gave a quick "no" and indicated that she does make known in nonverbal ways how she feels and what she wants. Thus, a teacher note in October stated: "Though she doesn't use complete sentences, her manner and intonation are extremely expressive, and she uses many appropriate gestures—sometimes real pantomimes as well."

Finally, it should be noted that classroom teachers report that after getting over her initial shyness, Rosa was an active and curious student throughout the year who loved to ask questions about a range of subjects related to classroom activities. In short, Rosa's linguistic and auditory challenges have not repressed her ability and willingness to speak out and make herself understood by others. It should also be noted that Rosa's classroom teachers and her speech and language teacher agreed that the level and type of interaction occurring within Rosa's second-grade classroom contributed significantly to the progress she did make in communication.

Rosa came into second grade with significant challenges in the area of reading. She began the year incapable of identifying by sight any letters, numbers, or words. She did not know the alphabet. Since Rosa finds it difficult to remain focused for long, she had difficulty

listening attentively through an entire story or book, especially when being read to in large groups. She became easily distracted and, while never disruptive, would disengage from the group and shift her attention to other things, e.g., fiddling with her shoes or staring at the rug.

Nevertheless, by Thanksgiving Rosa had become more interested in books and in reading. She would remain on task and engaged when read quite simple and predictable stories. For example, she loved the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* and would chant the refrain found running through the story ("Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See"). By the end of the year, Rosa has grown to like books, though she still prefers to stick with some familiar ones. She would also run her fingers along the words from left to right as though she were reading them. She would name a picture on the page and go on to anticipate pictures on other pages.

The teachers also found that Rosa tended to prefer and be more interested in stories when read to in one-on-one situations and in small groups. Often, a classmate would sit with Rosa and help her run her finger under the words being read and would encourage Rosa to say the words out loud. The friend would also talk with Rosa about the pictures in the book. As one of the classroom teachers remarked, Rosa "never" sits alone and reads—her reading is almost always done with a friend, a teacher, or her reading group.

As of February 1995, Rosa had mastered sitting in a large group and watching and listening to stories being read aloud for at least five minutes at a time. At the end of the year, Rosa's teachers reported that Rosa would sit and listen with all of her classmates. However, one teacher expressed uncertainty as to whether or not Rosa was actually hearing what was being said and taking it in. The teacher wondered to what extent Rosa was simply being quiet and thinking about things other than the book being read.

By the end of the year, Rosa could read some letters, particularly those found in her own name. She learned a few other letters upon sight but verbally identified them somewhat inconsistently. Thus, teacher notes record one lesson when the teacher and Rosa were focusing on the letter "B." By the end of the lesson, Rosa was able to pick out the "B" in the name Billy (a classmate) and in ***B**rown **B**ear, **B**rown **B**ear.*

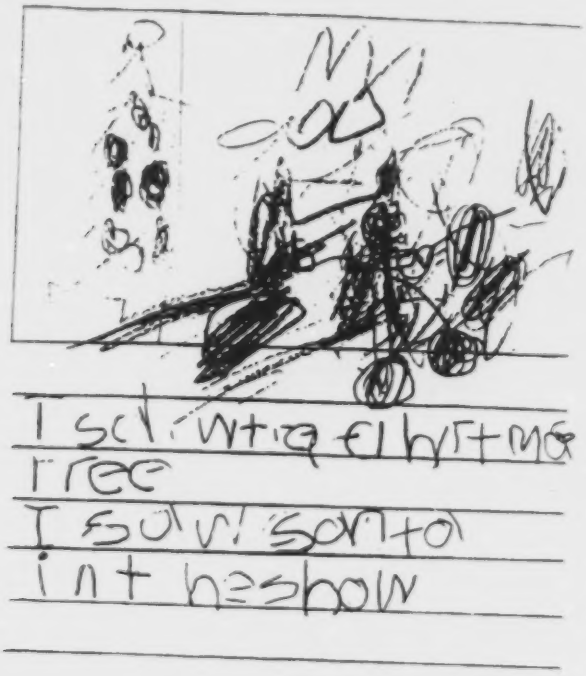
The teachers think that Rosa may be able to read some of the names of her classmates. She can sort their homework and put it into the proper slots labeled for each student. Also, Rosa is able to sometimes match some of her classmates' names in written form and match them to their photographs. What is not clear to the teachers is how much "matching" of letters is occurring as contrasted with "reading" of names.

Rosa engaged in prewriting activities throughout the year. She created verbal stories around pictures she has drawn and/or reflected her understanding of a story read from a book through her own artistic work. In January 1995, a teacher note records that Rosa made a picture of one of her classroom teachers who had injured a foot in an accident. "She

included a distinct face with "two big eyes, nice round circles. Remaining body parts were distinguished by color more than shape but highly detailed (with hair, arms, legs, and red feet)." When Rosa gave the picture to the teacher, she said, "Ms. Joanie broke feet." Additionally, Rosa has dictated stories to the classroom teachers who have then written the stories up for her. According to interview information from teachers, Rosa's interest in and enjoyment of creative story development has strengthened over the course of the year.

Rosa has some physical motor delays that hinder somewhat her ability to grasp properly a pencil, crayon, or pen. Consequently, several times a week, an occupational therapist worked with her, usually within the classroom, on writing activities. The therapist also worked with Rosa in using a specially designed wrist support that helps her hold writing implements properly.

Upon entering second grade, Rosa would only independently write "R-O-S" for her name. However, by November 1994, teacher observations indicate that Rosa could write her name assisted by verbal cues with 75 percent accuracy. The notes also state that she could trace the letters in her name from a dotted line with 80 percent accuracy. The following are two samples of Rosa's writing drawn from her classroom portfolio. The first sample was completed during December 1994; the second in May 1995. As can be seen, the improvement in Rosa's mechanical ability to form letters is significant (the December sample also shows Rosa's ability to relate her writing to concrete experience, i.e., her seeing Santa at a Christmas show).



Sample of
Rosa's Writing
December 1994

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Rosa's Writing
May 1995

Review of other samples of Rosa's portfolio also indicate considerable improvement in and strengthening of her writing ability. Compared to early work samples, later work samples demonstrate that she is writing words, not just letters, and that the words are clearly legible, and the letters much better formed and are written more consistently within the lines of the paper. Moreover, work samples show significant progress in her ability to write numbers. By the end of the year, Rosa was writing recognizable numbers within the lines and has lost the shakiness that characterized her earlier work.

Early in the year, Rosa realized that her handwriting looked different that other children's. Her letters had a "block-like" quality, were not completely formed, and tended to trail all over the place rather than stay within the lines or in a straight line. She had more difficulty in drawing figures with any detail, e.g., human figures with faces having ears, nose, and eyes.

At times, Rosa's recognition of such differences led her to not want to complete tasks by herself. At other times, Rosa would become frustrated with her handwritten work because it wasn't "right," by which she meant like other children's. When feeling unsure of herself, Rosa would also tell the teacher to write for her, saying, "You do! You do!" The teachers continued to expect Rosa to do her own work and emphasized to her the successes she was making in improving her ability to write and draw. By the end of the year, Rosa was

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reported to be much less occupied with worrying about how her work compared to others' and was focusing more on process rather than the final outcomes of her work.

There is some indication that over the year, Rosa had developed a sense of narrative even if she had difficulty expressing it. Rosa dictated several stories to a teacher who then worked with her to rephrase the sentences and to write it out. The stories have a flow to them—a beginning, middle, and end—and they do, in fact, tell an audience a story. The stories were meaningful enough to Rosa that she was able to recall it sufficiently to retell the story to the class on subsequent days.

Math and Numeracy

During the first part of the 1994-1995 school year, classroom teachers worked with Rosa to strengthen her math readiness skills. As noted earlier, Rosa was delighted with her grasp of the concepts of "same" and "different" and pointed out examples to the teachers enthusiastically. Thus, for example, she enjoyed comparing and contrasting teddy bears and play shoes. In November, she help up a quarter and then a nickel and asked the teacher "Different?" One teacher explained, "She really has that down pat now with same and different. There are two different editions of the same book and . . . the pictures look different. She gets so excited. 'Different, different!' Her whole face lights up."

Rosa also grasped and began to apply the concept of patterning as long as the patterns remained fairly simple. For example, in September, a teacher reported that Rosa successfully copied in colors the pattern of a unifix cube when the cube was placed next to her paper. Rosa also demonstrated the ability to identify familiar shapes among puzzle pieces though she had more difficulty with abstract shapes in other puzzles or patterns.

Her teachers specifically set as math goals for Rosa that she gain a grasp of math concepts from 1 to 10 (she entered second grade able to rote count from 1 to 3) and be able to demonstrate an understanding of 1:1 correspondence and addition computations up to the number 5.

Over the first several months of school, Rosa demonstrated that she could count out five sticks to put in the "10's and 1's box." More important, Rosa demonstrated she could count by being able independently to take, upon request, five of a larger group of objects offered by the teacher.

By January and February 1995, Rosa was playing math games with her classmates and was demonstrating the ability to count to six independently. A teacher note states that on her way to work with the occupational therapist, she independently and accurately counted the eight steps up to the next floor, "One, two, three . . ." and so on up through eight!

Although she was not able by the end of the school year to consistently and accurate count to 10, Rosa had significantly improved her ability to recognize numbers, conserve numbers, understand place values, and sum figures in addition. The teachers expressed a great deal ofsatisfaction with Rosa's progress in developing her math and numeracy skills over the course of the year.

Summary

Rosa has made significant progress in a number of areas over this year, particularly in the areas of more focused attention, cognitive-linguistic development, communication and verbal speech, writing, and math. When asked how they thought she would fare in third grade, her teachers said that as long as Rosa is placed in an integrative setting and receives the individualized and one-on-one attention she needs, she will do fine. According to her teachers, Rosa can and does learn if she's allowed to move at her own pace and if and where instructional strategies are designed for her learning needs. It will be impossible for her to continue making progress if she is ever placed in a classroom in which she is simply expected to "keep up" with the class. As of May, Rosa's teachers anticipated that she would be attending summer school and would then enter an inclusive third-grade classroom in the fall. They also expect to be assigned to Rosa's classroom next year. Assuming this turns out to be the case, the teachers and Rosa will have a good head start on the year and can maintain strong continuity between last year's work and work planned for next year.

In terms of the future, Rosa's teachers expressed two potential concerns for her and her progress. They candidly stated that they were not sure how Rosa's social relations would continue to develop and deepen as Rosa and her classmates get older. Enabling and helping Rosa to develop and maintain relationships in which she remains a peer with other children may become (or may not) more difficult as Rosa's age group matures. Also, they are concerned that as Rosa ages up, she may be placed in classrooms where academic attainment is emphasized at the expense of a student-centered and an individualized instructional focus. Rosa might get lost in the shuffle were this to be the case. However, at the end of this year, the teachers were enthusiastic about Rosa's growth and progress and excited by the prospect of having her in their classroom again next year.

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Adian

Introduction to Adian

Adian's teacher tells his class about the "touch and feel" activity they are going to do: Each child will stick his or her hand into a bag and describe what he or she feels. A little nervous, Adian is the first child to put his hand in the box. "It feels soft, like cotton!" he says, laughing with relief.

Adian is a warm, four-year-old Caucasian boy with fine, straight hair and large brown eyes. He has an intelligent, "serious" look on his face and is considered a high-achieving general education child. Adian has a fraternal twin brother, Martin, who is also part of the same prekindergarten inclusion class. Interestingly, Adian's sister has cerebral palsy and is part of the second-grade inclusion classroom. His mother commented that she and her husband strongly believe in inclusive education. They are both actively involved in the life of the school through the parents' association and schoolwide planning committee, as well as informally through classroom visits and other activities.

During an interview she remarked that she wanted her three children to be able to attend the same school. "I think it reinforces a sense of family when children know their siblings are in the same place." She added, "I wanted Adian to be exposed to other special education kids and to understand that other children have problems. Everyone has difficulties and special education kids should not be singled out because of an overt handicap."

Adian started the school year with many academic strengths. His teachers noted that he had entered school with a very high level of language development, comprehending and using words such as "antagonize," "rhyme," "echo," and "escape" in daily conversations. He could also write his name and knew colors and shapes. The teachers consider Adian highly creative and artistically gifted as well.

Adian adjusted easily to the prekindergarten inclusion classroom, both socially and emotionally. He is very healthy. His gross and fine motor coordination are above average for his age. He runs, jumps, skips, and throws balls. In addition, he enjoys writing and drawing activities (e.g., big books) and likes to immerse himself in puzzles.

General Progress

Adian's teachers stressed that their goals for him were to just really be there to aid his continuing development. "He's so self-motivated, we know that he's going to continue to grow on his own. We're there to provide him with materials and experiences." One teacher cautioned, "You don't want to take these very bright kids and push them and have them feel

pressured. I think what sometimes happens is that you squash all that freedom and creativity that you see going on. You have to be flexible enough to go with the child, especially in preK."

Throughout the year, Adian constantly used his prior knowledge to expand his understanding of the world and make connections with new things he was learning. The language-rich environment of the inclusion classroom encouraged and facilitated this growth. His teachers kept a running log highlighting Adian's ability to make sophisticated connections and recounted some these:

> We read a Native American folk tale about a raven and discussed native Americans. The next week, Adian wore a shirt with an eagle on it and announced, "This is my Native American shirt."
>
> During a discussion about Abraham Lincoln and how he wanted all men to be free, Adian made a connection between Lincoln and Martin Luther King.
>
> During a discussion about George Washington, Adian said, "I went over the George Washington Bridge last time."

By spring, Adian was able to trace, color and cut sophisticated animal shapes (giraffe, alligator, leopard) very precisely, indicating growth in fine motor skills.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

Adian started out the school year engaging in cooperative play with other children. In the block corner he would build elaborate block structures that resembled cities. At times, Adian would be very self-contained and focus intently on the task at hand. At other times, he would work cooperatively with other children. For example, in one instance a second boy was also building a piece of the structure. The two of them took a moment to confer about what else they want to include in their "city" (e.g., a gas station or a skyscraper) and then returned to their individual tasks. A few minutes later, another child ambled over to Adian with several plastic animals in hand and the two of them began setting up a zoo as part of the block structure, laughing and imitating the sounds of a tiger, bear, and alligator.

Teachers initially considered Adian a little aggressive, although not beyond the norm—a child who, while compliant, sometimes resisted responding to directions on the first request. By January teachers noted that his twin brother was becoming more assertive and taking the lead in meeting other children and making new friends. This was upsetting to Adian who had always been the leader in his relationship with his brother. Both Adian's mother and teachers thought this shift had temporarily affected his self-esteem. Adian reacted by becoming more defiant in class. A picture of his family that he drew in class was captioned, "This is the mean brother. He is mean to his brother and sister." To help Adian through

this adjustment period, his teachers gave him extra attention such as eating lunch at the same table with him and chatting one-on-one with him.

By spring Adian had moved to a new level of socialization and interest in other children. The child-centered learning environment allowed him to begin making new friends with both children and adults on his own, just as his brother had begun to do. During an observation in April, he finished drawing a flower and then moved around the room to see what other children were working on and to "show off" his own drawing. Near the end of the period, he came over and asked classroom observers if they would like to hear him hum "Yellow Submarine." After lunch, he invited two girls to play zoo with him in the block corner. A few minutes later, Adian got up and went over to the puzzle corner and joined several other children to match up missing puzzle pieces.

Communication, Reading, and Writing

The structure of the inclusion classroom allowed teachers to adapt prereading activities to Adian's advanced developmental level. At the beginning of the year, Adian evidenced strong prereading skills. He could write his own name and recognize the letters of the alphabet. The class worked with "big books" and then wrote their own big books based on something that happened from the one they had finished. Adian eagerly participated in these projects. Noting his existing prereading skills, the teachers remarked that Adian had advanced to a stage where he would soon be ready to sit and write by himself, not necessarily as part of the group. While they could not predict *when* that would happen, they noted that they would facilitate it at the appropriate time.

They encouraged Adian's vocabulary development as well, noting his progress throughout the year. Their November observation log on Adian included such entries as: "During a story, he observed that words were rhyming." "He said echo meant 'someone screaming the same thing back.'" "In the yard, he was upset with a child and said, 'Krystal is antagonizing me.'"

By January, Adian was drawing pictures and having the teacher write sentences to explain them. One of his sketches read, "This is a camel and this is the sun. They are both happy because they are in the desert." Near the end of March, he drew a picture of his teacher and attempted to write her name on it. He also wrote his mother and father's names after being shown. In April, he read a sentence from the book *My Garden*: "A bluebird is in my garden." Adian shows interest in both fiction and nonfiction books. He knows what words are (can point to them) and likes to read aloud big books with which he is familiar. Adian is also supported by a language-rich home environment, bringing in books he enjoys from home for the class to read.

During talking and listening activities in class, the teacher noted that Adian was very thoughtful in his responses to questions, taking his time to select the most descriptive word

he could find. His answer to How do you feel when someone says something nice to you? was, "I feel excited inside my body. My heart beats very fast and I feel good in my body." His teacher observed that Adian was confident in contributing to a discussion, regardless of the size of the group. Over the course of the year, Adian's responses became more detailed and elaborate.

Mathematics and Numeracy

Adian began the school year understanding the concepts of patterning, one-to-one correspondence, and sorting like objects. He knew all of his shapes and colors and could count beyond most of the other students in his class.

By February, during a math game Adian was able to match the number of beans to the numbers in an egg carton. He matched numbers 1–12. While using the Lego brand farm toy, he was able to duplicate a table and chair set from a picture on the Lego box.

Summary

Adian's mother expressed her satisfaction with his experience in the prekindergarten inclusion classroom. "In general, this was the best experience my kids have ever had. Nothing compares to the nurturing they have received in this program." She gave high marks to the pre-kindergarten teaching team as well, observing how they skillfully complemented each other in their teaching styles and respective expertise in early childhood and special education.

In addition, she noted that Adian's teachers constantly communicated with her about his progress throughout the year. "I'm there *every* day when I drop off and pick up my children. They always tell me things that he and his brother have done in school, and never in a rote or perfunctory way, either. They share a lot of rich details with me about their individual progress. I really appreciate the degree to which they keep me informed."

JULIO

Introduction to Julio

Its a warm May morning and the first-grade class is just returning to their classroom after practicing for the spring play. A small group of boys is gathered around Julio's desk. The boys are laughing and talking in English and Spanish. The excitement seems to center around a set of new Power Ranger stickers that Julio has brought into class. Julio and his treasures are the center of attention. While this scenario sounds like typical first grade camaraderie, Julio would not have been part of it just eight months earlier.

When he first came to the bilingual integrated class in fall 1994, Julio, was not speaking in Spanish or English and would only point or gesture toward things that he wanted. His previous special education teachers had reported that he could not talk. Julio did not know how to react to regular classroom events. He would freeze up and not move during fire drills. Teachers had a very difficult time getting him out of the room.

In 1993 Julio was labeled mildly mentally retarded by a team of New York Public Schools clinicians and specialists. He spent one year in a segregated special education classroom for students with mental retardation. His parents, both of whom speak Spanish at home, disagreed with the label and had a battery of neurological tests done because they felt their son was not mentally retarded. As the result, in 1994, Julio's label was changed from mental retardation to speech impaired/learning disabled. At the same time, Julio moved into the integrated bilingual classroom. He receives speech and language therapy in a group of three twice a week and individual occupational therapy once a week.

Teachers feel that Julio, who turned seven in February, has made great strides in his first year in the bilingual integrated classroom. Although he has taken more time than other children in the classroom, they report that Julio is learning and is even performing at the same level as his peers in some areas.

Communicating, Reading, and Writing

Communication has been Julio's biggest challenge. His IEP reported that Julio did not speak and could not communicate personal information such as full name, address, and telephone number. Teachers found out that, in fact, Julio was not nonverbal, but that he spoke at home.

Teachers in the integrated classroom have used a whole language-based, experiential curriculum that has allowed Julio to make connections with his prior knowledge. He began speaking, but only to favorite teachers about a month into the year. At first, teachers report

that Julio was giving them mixed-up information and responses, but by spring he was organizing his thoughts and expressing them more clearly. According to one teacher:

> *He understands the theme that the class is working on—in both English and Spanish. He is making connections with his experiences that he never used to express. One breakthrough was when we were making a collage of things that we saw on a class trip to the supermarket. Julio called out, in a loud voice, "Cafe Bustelo" ("coffee" in Spanish). He had made that connection with what he saw.*

Usually Julio prefers to use English over Spanish. During a group book experience about animals he shared with the group: "I go to the zoo with Mom." For the most part he uses single words or short phrases, but he will communicate in complete sentences if the topic interests him.

In the beginning of the year, he did not know his letters, something that most children master in kindergarten. Julio's IEP documents that he did not recognize the letters in his first name. By the end of the year he had learned all of his letters in both English and Spanish. He is also more in tune with his environment. Objects and displays in the room are labeled and he knows where to look for letters and words that he needs. Julio can also copy from the board, a skill that some of his classmates have not yet mastered.

Julio went from not knowing the alphabet to writing single words at mid-year and short sentences by the end of the year. Julio says his favorite subject is writing. He is concentrated and focused in his writing and has filled journal books with pictures and words during the year. Usually he writes words in English. However, sometimes he translates from English to Spanish.

[Teacher's comment: In this sample, he wrote a lot more. He was translating Spanish to English. "Te Quiero — I love you" "Dia del Amor — Happy Valentine's Day"

Teachers have found that Julio, like many children, learns best when he can make connections with his experiences, and when the learning is hands-on and there are visual, tactile, or kinesthetic cues. During a science lesson related to a living—nonliving theme, the class cut up an apple and looked inside. At the end of the lesson, Julio made an detailed drawing of the apple and its seeds and wrote the word *apple* underneath it without a model. Most of the children in the class needed a model of the word written on the flip chart to copy.

While he enjoys writing, Julio is not as motivated in his reading. It is unclear what reading skills he had when he came into the class. In the beginning of the year, teachers could not conduct reading samples with Julio because he would not pick up books at a teacher's request.

Now Julio reads some words. His favorite book is an early first-grade English workbook that has a lot of pictures. Teachers feel that he comprehends a lot of what is read to him but doesn't respond verbally:

> *He knows what is happening. He doesn't raise his hand; although, many times he knows the answer when called on. He doesn't typically verbalize his reaction to stories. If he likes it, he laughs.*

One thing that is clear, regardless of the learning activity, Julio has to be motivated to respond. If the request from teachers is related to a favorite topic, such as monsters, Julio is more likely to respond to cues. After teachers read the monster story, *Where the Wild Things Are*, Julio answers questions that show he has a deep level of comprehension. Julio recognized that the children were in a dream within the story, a fairly subtle inference that only three other children in the class understood. During free journal time, Julio typically adds pictures and words that relate to the monsters he has just learned about.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

An important goal for Julio was getting him to communicate his needs and show his feelings and emotions. In the beginning, teachers described him as introverted, a definite loner. During choice time, when it was his turn to select an activity, he would just repeat over and over again, "Go away, go away" and wave the teacher away with his hand. When approached, he would often wrap his arm and hand around his head and over his ears as if to shield himself from the intrusion. He gradually has opened up. By spring he was not only getting involved in choice time, but also going to the lunch room and interacting with other children.

About mid-year, he began testing the waters with his peers. He began letting Robert, a general education student who sits in his cluster of desks, touch him. He began accepting Robert's gestures of friendship. Now he will laugh and sit with the other boys. Teachers

report that he even began starting to copy some of other students' rowdy behavior. He now waits and watches. Julio is clearly taking cues from other children, where before he was oblivious. His mother mentioned that he came home talking about another child's green eyes. Teachers are amazed by the changes in Julio: "He has friends now and when he first came that was inconceivable to us."

Julio is now not only comfortable with classroom routines and rules, he is acutely aware of them. He is a sensitive little boy who becomes upset when the rules are broken. Once a little girl pushed him and he came home and told his mother, "Melanie doesn't love me." Julio still likes to be on his own and chooses a seat in the back of the circle for group activities. However, he will respond to questions from teachers and peers now as opposed to the beginning of the year when he rarely responded. Now teachers report that his eyes light up when does a problem or activity correctly. He seems to want to please teachers. One teacher described her satisfaction when he reacted with happiness because he knew that he had made her happy.

Math and Numeracy

Julio's November IEP reports that he did not sequence numbers or know concepts such as before or after that are necessary in ordering. At the end of the year he is on grade level in mathematics computation. He knows before and after and uses a number line. While Julio computes addition and subtraction problems and writes down his answers, he doesn't have the language to explain the logic that he has used to arrive at his solution.

At the end of the year Julio's parents receive his report card. During the last reporting period his marks are satisfactory in most areas. Teachers urge his parents to work with Julio on reading and language over the summer, the two areas where he has the most difficulty. Julio will move on to second grade with his peers still labeled special education and will continue to receive speech and language therapy.

TODD

Introduction to Todd

Todd is engrossed in his work—addition with trading. He figures out the method by looking at the examples provided and then talks with his teacher about the notation used in the workbook. He tries a couple examples. His face lights up as he exclaims, "I got it! I got it!" Looking around the room, he proudly states, "I'm the first!" Todd then excitedly explains to his teacher how he has worked the problems.

A healthy seven-year-old, Todd is considered to be generally an "above grade-level" student. He participated in inclusion classrooms in first and second grades. Todd is an active child who likes large motor play and is interested in sports. Also, his fine motor skills are on target with his age. His teachers note that he is "never sick."

Todd's teachers immediately break into a smile when his name is brought up and they discuss him with enthusiasm: "Todd makes us look good in any situation." In many ways, Todd serves as an anchor for the entire classroom in much the same way, for example, as one player in a basketball game can provide an entire team with a source of confidence, stability, and focus. Indeed, he assumes the role of class leader in many areas. Other children often look to him for cues and for direction. Classroom staff implied that they looked to Todd to serve as a classroom "barometer"—a source of feedback on how the class is moving along.

Todd is very congenial and is liked by children and adults alike. He is typically an easy-going child with a good sense of humor, which he shares freely. He is also generally interested in his classmates and shows a highly developed sense of "otherness" or caring for what is going on with them. As the teachers note, Todd gives off the sense that he is comfortable with who he is. He is interested in a range of things and talks easily with adults about "adult" topics (topics that many kids would not want to discuss). They also note in his assessment records that he "thinks of himself as a good student." He takes for granted that he will catch on and fear of failure does not appear to be in his repertoire.

Not unlike many second graders, Todd is somewhat more interested in play and sport activities than academics. The teachers report that occasionally he needs a little guidance to move him back to the academic work. As one teacher put it, "If he had a choice between reading a book in the classroom or playing outside on the jungle gym, he would definitely choose the latter." The operative word here is "choice." Todd is very tuned in to the classroom culture and rules and is not at all resistent to classroom schedules and assigned work.

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While in second grade, Todd had academic challenges he needed to address. He did well in his studies, but his teachers thought that he was not always being challenged or made to "push the envelope" in terms of the boundaries of his knowledge, experience, and capacities. They wanted to see him stretch his skills. It quickly became clear that while Todd "always does a good job," he is capable of doing more and will only push himself when really inspired.

The teachers also found a flip side to Todd's congeniality and popularity. He has a slight tendency to oversocialize. From time to time, teachers would have to bring him back to the focus of the class or group activity and limit his talking and socializing with other students. At times, he would seem to be inattentive or out of synch with a lesson; but the teachers would discover that he had been aware of everything that was going on: "He's one step ahead of you at any given point. He looks like he's paying no attention at all. He's doodling or whispering to somebody, but he's still in the picture. He still knows exactly what's going on."

Over the year, Todd was doing well in school and was fitting in well and enjoying classroom life. However, around March 1995, his teachers began to notice some subtle changes in him. His good naturedness began to give way to incidents of speaking out at inappropriate times. At times, not willing to raise his hand to answer questions, he began loudly calling out answers or, sometimes, questions to the teachers before other children had a chance to indicate they had something to say.

About the same time, Todd began to need (or want) greater physical contact with teachers and would suddenly run to them for a hug. During this year, Todd's mother had a baby and his household was presumably going through typical adjustments in accommodating a newborn. While never a "problem", Todd did in the latter part of the school year demonstrate the slight but noticeable impulsiveness and the greater need for reassurance and affection. Todd's teachers responded by giving Todd more physical reassurance in the classroom and more guidance to help him rein in his sometimes inappropriate impulsiveness. Whatever their origins, Todd's new behaviors had not disappeared by the end of the school year.

Socialization and Relating to Self and Others

Todd entered second grade as a fairly sociable child. He has continued to exercise fairly advanced social skills for his age and grade level. One of Todd's real strengths is his ability to successfully serve as a natural mediator of disputes and disagreement, potential and actual, between his classmates. Moreover, the students tend to listen to him and respect his credibility as an arbiter.

Todd's skills as a peacemaker relate to another of his characteristics: He is typically a calm and even-tempered child who becomes upset only if he thinks something is unfair. The

teachers explained that Todd has a very deep-seated and intense concern about fairness—he tries to follow the rules and presumes that others will, too. When this doesn't happen, he is hurt and upset that anyone, child or adult, would willingly break the rules knowing that doing so works against the welfare of others. The teachers provided an illustration of this concern: During a baseball game, a child (with special needs) refused to follow the rules of the game. For 20 minutes, Todd repeatedly and patiently attempted to explain the rules and how ignoring these rules affected players and teams. Even after repeated coaching, the child was unable or unwilling to play by the rules. Eventually, Todd became frustrated and upset with this child. His distress came from a real sense of hurt that someone he had tried to show good faith to had not responded in kind and in that sense had broken the rules.

While it does not appear that Todd has any single best friend in class, he is well liked and appears to like his classmates. He was in an inclusive classroom last year and is used to a range of interests, capabilities, and so forth, among the children in class. To those children who appear less able for any reason to join in kids' activities, Todd shows a caring and a willingness to try and involve them. For example, this spring, Todd organized a classroom baseball team. He not only recruited but actively coached these children, some of whom had special needs, to ensure they could serve on the team and play ball. Indeed, Todd served as a role model to his classmates in relating to children who need extra support in the classroom. As one teacher noted about Todd's friendship with a child: "Todd (has) ... made it socially acceptable to help Sarah. So now everyone wants to help Sarah."

Todd's teachers found themselves tending to look to him to set the example for how activities ought to be conducted or assignments ought to be handled. Indeed, because of Todd's patience and gentleness, they have found themselves pairing him with children who have more difficulty understanding and/or following directions. Besides being a leader, Todd appears to be a teacher as well. Indeed, the teachers repeatedly note that they need to make sure Todd is not "overused" in classrooms to the point that his needs get overlooked. They felt that a child like Todd who does well across the board in all of his studies could be taken for granted if teachers and staff are not careful.

Communication, Reading, and Writing

Todd is a very communicative child who is not only able to articulate his thoughts well but who also has a high level of receptivity. In noting his involvement in class discussions, Todd's teachers said, "We know that he is going to say something really great. Usually, he really does facilitate classroom discussion." Classroom observations revealed that Todd also interacts freely and easily with other children in the class.

Todd entered second grade with an above-grade vocabulary and ability to use that vocabulary. Thus, his teachers' worked this past year to help Todd develop and enrich this vocabulary. End-of-year data indicate that Todd has in fact extended his vocabulary and has moved to a more sophisticated level of communicative abilities. According to his teachers,

Todd should have no problems in beginning the next grade; rather, the challenge for third-grade teachers will be to continue to find ways to extend his already considerable communicative skills.

Todd's teachers continued through the year to describe him as "on or a little above" grade level in reading. Todd demonstrated that he loves stories and likes to read. He particularly seems to enjoy participating in class discussions about reading. Teachers indicate that his discussion is very rich. For example, during one reading period, the teacher read a story about a little boy who helps an older woman regain her memory. In talking about the story, Todd exclaimed, "There's just so much love in that book!"

Although he enjoys listening to books, Todd is an active child who often prefers to play and socialize with friends rather than read on his own. Yet, he does like to read, particularly nonfiction, in areas such as sports, in which he has an interest. He is not hesitant to read aloud and when doing so, is very expressive and "gets into" the diverse characters in the story. He likes funny books and has been known to chuckle throughout a book, particularly at the funny moments in the story.

Observations and teachers' notes suggest that Todd really enjoys reading out loud to other children. In terms of reading mechanics, Todd was described as reading quite accurately. When he did make a mistake, he was not quite consistent in his self-correcting though he did do so when he realized that what he said didn't make sense. Sometimes, he would also omit words but appeared to have a good sense of the meaning of the sentences.

Early in the school year, one teacher reported, "His receptiveness is probably higher than others, but his actual reading is not." However, Todd did grow into reading more as the year passed. For example, teacher notes record that Todd had become "engaged" in books he was reading and that he seemed "into" the stories. By the end of the year, Todd was really getting into the characters in a book and would discuss them with teachers and classmates. Although Todd may still have preferred playing ball on the school yard to reading, he was finding more satisfaction in his reading. For example, during one observation, Todd read a book and immediately moved over to a table of classmates to discuss what he had just read.

During the year, his teachers observed that they would like to see Todd take on more complex stories and books and begin reading chapter books. End-of-year data suggest that Todd did, in fact, begin to read chapter books and had no particular problems in moving on to them. On his final grade card, the teacher commented that "Todd has taken a leap in terms of his reading material. He now chooses challenging chapter books, stays with them, and enjoys and understands them."

Todd's final "grade" for the year in reading was excellent. He was graded as excellent in the areas of effectively selecting books, showing an interest in reading, reading with understanding, participating in literature discussions, concentrating when reading

independently, using strategies to figure out unknown words, using his reading journal effectively, independently reading grade-level appropriate material, and demonstrating effort in his reading.

Todd also excels in writing. One teacher noted early in the year, "I love Todd's writing!" Another teacher stated that Todd "always brings his humorous voice to his writing." From the beginning of the year, Todd seemed to enjoy writing and would draw on his personal experiences for material. One of the frequent topics he wrote about in his writing journal was the birth of his new baby brother and his becoming a big brother.

A review of Todd's writing samples shows him to be quite expressive and often, almost chatty. In one piece, Todd wrote about a Berenstein Bear book he had read. He wrote that he learned from the book that you can tell a tree's age from the number of rings it has in its trunk. This fact apparently intrigued him.

Todd has shown himself to be above grade level in his ability to use vocabulary and description in his writing. His teachers note that his ideas as expressed in his writing have been very good and his writing has shown a nice logic as well as interesting perspective.

During the first half of the year, Todd was very open about writing fairly personal material in his journal. However, around March 1994, about the same time that Todd began demonstrating increased impulsivity and an increased desire for physical connection, he began to withdraw from writing, including his journal writing. At the end of the year, the teachers were still encouraging him to return to the expressive and personal writing he had done earlier in the year.

Todd entered second grade with above grade-level writing skills. He remained at or above grade level in writing especially in his use of vocabulary and his descriptive abilities. He continued through the year to need to work on spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but made improvements in these areas by year's end. As with Todd's reading, his major challenges in writing relate to building existing strengths and motivating him to extend his writing skills further, e.g., using a richer and more complex vocabulary, developing more complex ideas, and developing his narrative skills. At the end of the year, Todd's teachers felt that he had made good progress in these areas.

Todd's final overall grade in writing was an "excellent." He also received a grade of excellent in the areas of selection of productive topics, attentive listening to others and participation in class discussion, use of upper- and lower-case letters and punctuation marks, writing of complete sentences, expressing thoughts clearly in writing, moving toward conventional spelling, revising so that completed pieces are well developed, and effort in writing. These grades of excellent in most cases represented an advance from a grade of "good" and in one case, "satisfactory" from the beginning of the year.

Math and Numeracy

Of all areas of instruction, Todd appears to like math the best. Not only does he enjoy the puzzle solving aspect of math but he does seem to have a natural aptitude for the logic—the rules governing operations—of mathematics and mathematical computation.

According to his teachers, Todd entered second grade with above grade-level math skills. He has continued to develop these skills and expand his ability to think about and apply mathematical problem solving.

His final overall grade in math was "excellent." He also received the grade of excellent in developing useful strategies for solving math problems, demonstrating a knowledge of math concepts, demonstrating an ability to work independently, solving word problems, doing computations with accuracy, knowing number facts, and demonstrating effort in math. These grades reflect an improvement from Todd's first grading period math grades, which were "good" in each of the areas listed.

Summary

As this portrait of Todd indicates, he did very well in his second-grade inclusion classroom. He made marked progress in a broad range of areas, and his major academic challenges primarily revolve around a need to be continually motivated and inspired to extend existing knowledge and skills. His second-grade teachers believe he is very prepared for third grade. While not at all a concern, the teachers did express the hope that Todd outgrows the slightly greater need for reassurance and the occasional inappropriate impulsivity that he displayed during the latter part of the past school year.

Todd's classroom teachers suggest that for third grade, Todd will need to focus more on the mechanics of writing, including the more formal aspects of punctuation, and so forth.

Perhaps a teacher's note on one of Todd's grade cards best sums up how his teachers felt about him and his second-grade year in school: "As exciting as his academic achievements are, they are only a part of the picture of Todd in Room 112. He is a joyful, energetic presence—as bright as a new penny—a good friend, a respected leader, and a truly great kid!"

LINDSAY

Introduction to Lindsay

Lindsay's teacher was enjoying sharing her favorite story about the young girl. She remembers:

> We've been doing text ... chicken and the egg ... camping ... We have a sleeping bag and a cooler and all of these things. I was in the art center, Lindsay was in the camping center and she brought me over an egg and this thin piece of string. And she said, "Ms. Sutton, can you tie this string around the egg?" So I'm trying and it's falling off. Obviously, I know she has tried it and has been unsuccessful because she doesn't bother you if she can do something by herself. Finally, I tie it up and say, "All right, Lindsay. Why am I tying this string around an egg?" And she answers, "Going hunting for chickens!"

Lindsay, a dainty, almost delicate child, is a general education kindergartner. The teachers describe her as "bright," "wonderful," "very smart," and as a student who marches to her own drummer. Lindsay is a very healthy kindergartner with normal physical development. However, one teacher notes that Lindsay is "one step outside of the normal" in her charming ways.

Her teachers report that Lindsay operated at above grade level in almost all academic areas throughout the school year. She took particular interest in artistic activities this year. Her teachers believe that she has an "artistic personality" and actually thinks and sees the world in artistic terms. Moreover, they stated that Lindsay has "incredible" artistic ability both in drawing and in painting. They described her work as having a maturity that is typically absent from a kindergartner's. Lindsay's mother says she has a photographic memory, and upon seeing something that intrigues her, will rush home and draw it with amazing accuracy.

Lindsay's parents appear to be very involved in her education and provide her with educational experiences at home. Lindsay's mother believes that her daughter is gifted in a number of ways—linguistically, academically, emotionally, artistically, and so forth. She indicated that while she and her husband are very happy with the individualized attention that Lindsay received this year, they have some concerns, both academic and social, regarding her placement in the inclusive classroom. They realize that creating fluent readers by the end of the year is not the aim of a developmentally appropriate kindergarten. At the same time, however, they hope that Lindsay will be constantly challenged in her classroom. They suggested grouping her with older children in the first grade for some activities. Socially, they believe that Lindsay's getting to know children with special needs has helped her learn that diversity is good and has encouraged in her a caring and a willingness to help others. On the other hand, Lindsay's mother was concerned that Lindsay might imitate some of the

behavior of children with special needs. She does not want Lindsay to pick up bad habits from these or any other children.

In terms of her work habits, Lindsay's teachers report that she is intense and persistence in crafting her work to her own specifications. They would say, "Come on, Lindsay. That looks fine; it's time to move on." But if Lindsay wasn't satisfied with her work, she would refuse to turn it in and would continue intently working on it until she was happy. Although Lindsay's intensity requires some extra patience on the part of her teachers, they appear to admire her "stick-to-it-ness" and determination.

Lindsay's teachers found her to be very responsible. They report that she kept her desk fairly organized, remembered to take and return papers, put her outside clothes on by herself, and listened well to directions. They also noted that she is very well behaved and that she adapts well to classroom routines and schedules.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

According to her mother, Lindsay did not have a positive experience last year at preschool. She noted that Lindsay frequently stayed home from school even though she "adored" her preschool teacher. The teachers explained that this may have been due in part to the cliques among children who were not particularly friendly nor welcoming toward Lindsay. Lindsay remained somewhat "on the outside looking in" on classroom life last year. Fortunately, however, classroom dynamics this past year were much "kinder" and more welcoming of Lindsay and other children. Whether it was the classroom climate or maturation or some combination, Lindsay joined in and became much more a part of the social life of the classroom this past year. However, the teachers noted that she continued to stand back until she had made her own decision about where and how to join in activities with other children. Once her decision was made, however, Lindsay jumped right in and seemed to enjoy the other children and social activities. Throughout the year, she got along well with children in the classroom. In February, her mother still hoped to see Lindsay become more engaged in social activity. But from her teachers' perspectives, Lindsay was not so much shy as she was cautious. Caution and independence remained a part of Lindsay throughout the year even as her relations with other children expanded and deepened.

Lindsay's most consistent playmate this year has been Bradley. Bradley has some special needs due to difficulties in communicating with other people. According to the teachers, Lindsay had often "taken care of Bradley" and served as his interpreter to other children in the class. Early in the year, Bradley became very attached to Lindsay and had difficulty being separated from her. However, over the course of the year, he grew increasingly independent. Similarly, while Lindsay remained friends with Bradley, she eventually developed some other playmates and widened her social circle. In April, Lindsay played animated games with a girl in class. Later, another girl put her arm around Lindsay and

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hugged her. They put their foreheads together. Lindsay then turned to a boy sitting next to her and said, "I'm your friend, too."

Throughout the year, Lindsay demonstrated a quiet sense of confidence in her abilities across all areas of effort. She participated in class discussions and commented with assurance and even firmness on some occasions. On the other hand, Lindsay also displayed a need for a great deal of physical contact and affection from her teachers. The teachers recalled an instance when Lindsay's mom called to say that Lindsay had been upset that day because she did not get a hug from a teacher. This may have been a remnant of Lindsay's discomfort in the classroom the previous year (or it may be that Lindsay is just an affectionate child who likes the warmth provided by others).

Lindsay's mother has instilled in Lindsay a keen interest in ecological issues. As a result, at lunch, Lindsay carefully places her disposable lunch items in the recycling bin and cleans up with water and vinegar rather than a commercial cleaner. She also shared her information on strategies for helping the environment with other children when they were environmentally "incorrect."

Communication, Reading, and Writing

According to Lindsay's teachers, she entered kindergarten with fairly advanced communication skills. She was able to clearly articulate her thoughts and she listened well to what others had to say, which showed in her ability to follow directions. The teachers noted that Lindsay's unique way of seeing the world was often reflected in the comments she made to the class, which were often detailed and elaborate.

While Lindsay's verbal skills were quite good, she preferred to express herself through her artistic work. Apparently, Lindsay had become verbal and fairly articulate at an early age (two or younger). Her teachers suggested that feeling that she had mastered verbal communication, Lindsay this year decided to turn her focus to various forms of art as a way of expressing herself.

According to Lindsay's mother, she worked with Lindsay extensively from the time she was two years old to learn sight words and to memorize the spelling of these words. Indeed, her mother suggested that Lindsay was almost obsessive about "reading" in this way, although she did not know if Lindsay was actually reading or just memorizing words. Additionally, Lindsay's mother has and does read to her quite a bit, and her parents are quite proud of Lindsay's aptitude in reading. The teachers noted in their assessment records that Lindsay has a "high confidence" level in all areas of language arts: reading, listening, writing, and talking.

Her teachers generally agreed that Lindsay started kindergarten with an advanced skill level in reading. Moreover, she maintained above-grade-level reading throughout the year.

Lindsay particularly enjoyed having stories read to her, especially stories about animals. Lindsay herself stated, "I love books. My favorite stories are about animals. I like it when Mommy reads me stories about animals."

At one point during the year, the teachers noted that Lindsay seemed to lose some of her enthusiasm and interest in reading. At the same time, her absorption in her artistic work increased. The teachers worked very hard to enable Lindsay to make a connection between her art work and her reading. They encouraged her to bring her extensive personal experience and rich imagination to the "art" of reading and to find in books sources of new ideas for her artwork.

By year's end, Lindsay's teachers believed that she had made significant progress in expanding her reading skills. For example, assessment records reflect that by March 1995, Lindsay was picking up a book, holding it properly, reading from left to right, using picture clues to interpret words, and beginning to independently decode words. Moreover, the teachers indicated in assessment records and informal notes that Lindsay had become increasingly interested in reading again and, even in kindergarten, was well on her way to becoming a "fluent reader."

Teachers' remarks and observations concur that Lindsay enjoys writing and, for a period of time this past year, she was really focused on writing out words. For example, when a teacher asked Lindsay what she was doing, she replied that she was writing her words because she loved them.

Lindsay came into kindergarten with a relatively good concept of the function of letters and words. While she could spell some words verbally when she began the year, she was not yet actually writing letters or words. However, her writing journal and other work samples reflect that Lindsay has excellent fine motor skills and did very well over the year in learning how to form and space letters in her writing.

However, as in reading, Lindsay was primarily interested in pursuing her artwork rather than her writing skills during a good part of the year. One of Lindsay's teachers observed:

> When we do our journals, she wants to draw where she was, what she was doing. She's more social and she's still into her art, but the words aren't as interesting to her—maybe because she has them in her head already.

So the challenge this past year for her teachers, and ultimately for Lindsay herself, was to foster Lindsay's bridging between the world of drawing and painting and the world of letters.

As in other areas, the teachers indicated that by the end of the year Lindsay had progressed in terms of the physical ability to write. Moreover, her journal entries and other written work were considered to be at least on grade level and sometimes a bit above grade level. However, if her preoccupation with art continues, her teachers believe that Lindsay will need

encouragement in first grade to become inspired by writing as a medium of expression that complements, not replaces, the crayon and paints. As one of her teachers noted, "Lindsay's pictures have such wonderful stories to tell" and it would be exciting to have Lindsay enjoy sharing those stories in written as well as more aesthetic forms.

Math and Numeracy

According to the teachers, Lindsay was as advanced in math and numeracy as she was in the language arts area. Over the year, she made good progress in many areas including:

- Identifying and creating shapes
- Applying discriminatory concepts, e.g., bigger than, shorter than, etc.
- Patterning
- Rote counting up to 10
- One-to-one correspondence
- Counting out items

Lindsay also did well in math problem-solving skills, particularly in how to adjust spatial and visual relationships to come up with shapes. For example, at a table with a teacher and four other children, Lindsay very carefully placed pegs in a plastic board. When the teacher asked her what she was making, Lindsay said, "A wreath." "What shape is a wreath?" asked the teacher. Lindsay confidently replied, "A circle." Standing, she worked at outlining the wreath, which turns out to be a square because she follows the rectilinear grid of the pegboard. Lindsay intently worked out how to round off her wreath by giving it an octagonal shape. When the other teacher asked what she was making, Lindsay dropped her eyes, smiled, and looked confident as she answered, "A wreath." "A wreath!" the teacher repeated. "What's the red thing?" "A bow," Lindsay replied.

As always, marching to her own drummer, Lindsay resisted performing the patterning activities planned by her teachers. Rather than follow the patterns provided to her, Lindsay's artistic interest at times led her to depart from the model to pursue patterns of her own creation. Smiling, the teachers noted that Lindsay clearly grasped the concept of patterning—it was sticking to the "tried and true" that seemed to give her difficulty. On the other hand, teachers commented that they took some pride in Lindsay's independence and especially in her persistence in exercising her creative talents!

Summary

Clearly, Lindsay is a unique child who very quietly but determinedly finds and makes her own way in developing her many skills and capacities. Over the year in kindergarten, Lindsay made significant progress in her social development, her growing sense of self-esteem, her language and literacy skills, and her ability to solve math problems. Perhaps

most important, Lindsay found her way among her classmates and more fully joined in classroom life than she had in preschool. Additionally, she found a supportive and caring environment that nurtured her talents while helping her to extend those talents to new areas of effort.

All signs point to the fact that Lindsay should have no problems moving up to first grade and she will, in fact, enter first grade above grade level in almost all academic areas. The primary challenge for Lindsay in first grade will be to further develop (with assistance) her flexibility and ability to interweave her own interests with those outside herself.

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JOSEPH

Introduction to Joseph

Arriving late to his class one morning, Joseph hears his teachers describe an experiment with salt and eagerly exclaims, "Oh, we're doing science!" He quickly joins his classmates and they begin testing the properties of salt. Working cooperatively with several other students, Joseph draws and labels cause-and-effect sketches in his notebook to illustrate their first experiment. The caption beneath one sketch read: "When I blowed the salt it spread out." Later, Joseph blows salt from several surfaces to determine whether it is light or heavy: the table, his shirt sleeve, a book—anything he can find to sprinkle with salt. With great satisfaction he concludes, "Salt is light!"

Joseph, an active seven-year-old boy with an inquisitive and imaginative intellect, is a high-achieving general education student in a second-grade inclusion classroom. His teachers say he's a delight to have in class.

Joseph is very verbal and articulate. He has a extensive vocabulary and continually incorporates new concepts, ideas, and words into his everyday language use. He effectively uses language to express his ideas and to get his point across in one-on-one interactions and in group situations. He is working at or above second grade level in both language arts/literacy and math.

Although Joseph exhibits advanced academic skills, teachers noted that he is not a "nerd," but rather a lively boy who interacts well with his classmates. They frequently commented on his personal exuberance and motivation as well as his social generosity and helpfulness toward other children, including classmates with special needs. Joseph has asthma, which does interfere with some of his playground activities. However, it does not present a problem for his school work or school life, and he is otherwise healthy and adept in activities that require gross and fine motor control.

Like his father, who taught him to read in Spanish, Joseph is bilingual and sometimes translates for other students in class as well as for his Spanish-speaking mother.

General Progress

Throughout the school year, his teachers noted that Joseph would "soak up" learning opportunities—often taking problem-solving activities and creative assignments to levels of complexity far beyond what his teachers expected. Despite his high academic interest and achievement, Joseph was outgoing and related very well with classmates during the fall semester.

Because Joseph already excels academically, his teachers' goals during the year lay more in the area of keeping him as excited and enthusiastic as he has been. At the same time, they have posed new challenges (distinctive, higher-grade-level challenges) that extend Joseph abilities but do not threaten or frustrate him. Toward this end, they continually looked for ways to individualize instruction to use his ability to make abstract connections; enrich his already sophisticated grasp of language; and expand his artistic, creative talents.

Teachers repeatedly remarked on Joseph' interest in science. "Joseph approaches the world with a questioning attitude," they remarked. Any project that engaged him in questioning "how and why things happen" captured his interest and imagination. On one occasion, a teacher noted his eagerness and excitement about the ocean unit the class was preparing to study. Joseph read a list of questions he had prepared about killer whales as the first step in a student-directed scientific inquiry process—a process which teachers felt he had already internalized.

In late March, Joseph had finished his homework with a teacher at his side. His assignment was to explain how fish get to restaurants in Brooklyn. It was a follow-up writing task after a field trip to a fish store. Joseph remembered different places the clerk had said the fish come from, looked for these places on the globe, and determined which oceans they would have come from. He explained to his teacher, "Seafood comes from the Pacific Ocean and Atlantic Ocean. It is sent by planes, boats, and trucks. Then Fifth Avenue gets the seafood. They mail the seafood by trucks to restaurants." The teacher noted that Joseph also made geographic connections and, in his writing, explained that the fish from Florida would have been transported to Brooklyn by boat and trucks whereas fish from Hawaii would have been flown. "Joseph initiated taking it in all of these other directions," the teacher explained.

Joseph' teachers also describe him as self-critical and a perfectionist—a child who would take great pains to make sure his work products were precise and perfect. Even though he writes and draws well, teachers noted that he would throw away "great" papers and re-do them. Throughout the year, teachers have focused on encouraging Joseph to value more what he does and the effort he puts into things rather than focusing on "imperfections."

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

Joseph was described as "very well-liked," having a lot of friends—a child who would go out of his way to help other children follow routines, clarify conversations, or feel at ease in the classroom. He works well independently and in groups and is unusually sophisticated in being able to explain something academic to another child without "doing it for him or her." For example, Joseph had recently discovered a book in the classroom with directions for making mosaics by gluing beans to cardboard and had offered to "be the teacher for this," which his teachers arranged.

His teachers noted that "sometimes Joseph will regress" in the company of "his friends (who are very wound up, energetic, sometimes out-of-control boys)" but was easily reminded of good behavior or attention to task. For example, during a science experiment to test the properties of salt, Joseph and another boy began working together productively, feeding each other's imagination. Ten minutes later, however, they started to become "silly" and spilled the salt while wrestling. After being reminded by his teacher to return to work, Joseph eagerly continued the experiment by himself. "He definitely has his mischievous side, which is good—otherwise he'd be too serious as a child," his teacher noted.

In the middle of the year, a significant change came over Joseph, which teachers attributed to a number of factors: emotional sensitivity, a lack of true peers among the boys in his classroom, and/or the illness of a grandfather living with his family. Teachers expressed concern that Joseph was increasingly sad, easily upset, and less motivated at school. Occasionally, he complained of being teased and not wanting to come to school. One day in January, "he put his head down during research group and cried." When asked why, he would say only that he was "mad at two people." During the day, with his teacher's coaxing, Joseph revealed that his feelings had been hurt by two other children. Staff speculated that his sensitivity was acute enough that subtle teasing by other children would upset him, especially since he was not inclined to verbalize his feelings right away when someone would say or do something he didn't like. At the same time, one watcher noted that during a classroom activity he put his hand on Joseph' shoulder and the boy responded, "Don't touch me, Mr. Robinson." The teacher noted that he respected his request and was pleased to see that children in the inclusive classroom environment were learning to verbally express their own boundaries with other people—something the staff consistently encouraged the children to do.

School personnel also felt that Joseph might be lonely, having no classmates his equal in intellectual or social sophistication. Most male classmates were described as lively and physical, but only three approached Joseph' achievement level. These three refused to work on a book they were collectively authoring without Joseph, who, on the day of this discussion wouldn't join them. To remedy this lack of peers, school personnel were considering placing Joseph in a classroom with other high-functioning (although not quite as high as Joseph) boys for third grade.

When Joseph came with his mother for a primary language record conference, his teachers took this opportunity to learn what might be upsetting him. They learned that his grandfather had been very ill. By late March, one teacher commented that Joseph' seemed less upset. "I think just having talked about it and acknowledged it when his mother was here was helpful. I think it helped us see him as fallible rather than infallible. Joseph is a child to whom it is easy to not pay attention because you know he'll be fine." By May, teachers noted that Joseph' upsets with other children had subsided; in addition, his grandfather was doing better at home.

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Reading, Writing and Communicating

At seven years old, Joseph already has a very sophisticated grasp of language and its usage. According to his teachers, he is an "amazing" reader. They laughingly report that they have a hard time "keeping up" with him. On a more serious note, they indicate that they have to work at finding ways to keep him challenged and extend his boundaries.

Throughout the year, Joseph has shown an increasingly sophisticated ability to make abstract connections about a wide range of topics and language activities. For example, teachers commented that since the beginning of the school year in September, Joseph has enjoyed riddles and is able to "get" puns. In October, when the teachers introduced the first of a series of *The Case of* books, Joseph immediately recognized by inference that such titles signaled mysteries. In December, Joseph and another boy read riddles aloud to each other, leafing through the pages of a book to find riddles they liked. After the other boy moved away, Joseph offered a riddle to a teacher, then continued to read silently for awhile.

In January, Joseph challenged a teacher's statements that Rosa Parks had planned her action that began the Montgomery bus boycott and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. He got a fourth- or fifth-grade level book from the biography box and, using the Table of Contents, found a chapter entitled "Don't Ride the Buses." He read silently, then said to the teacher, "She didn't plan it," and fluently read aloud two pages that supported his thesis. By late spring, Joseph was reading aloud fluently, would self-correct for meaning, and could make predictions while reading. He would also correct other children when they made mistakes.

Joseph' writing skills were also considered to be unusual for a second grader. He seemed to have an awareness of audience when writing and the need to supply enough information for a reader to understand the topic. In addition, the teachers noted that he was able to write in fiction, nonfiction, and autobiographical genres. By March, Joseph was writing complete sentences using grammatical conventions, although, as is typical of second graders, he resisted reviewing his writing critically and revising the text. While he would revise a paper to correct grammar or spelling, he never revised the content. One teacher remarked, "I think that he really has this idea that what's coming off of the pencil is the final product." Staff noted that they wanted to help Joseph expand in this area since writing was a strong area of self-expression for him.

By spring, Joseph was using mostly standard rather than invented spelling and demonstrated an interest in determining the "correct" spelling for words. For example, when writing up the science experiment with salt, his captions for his sketches were in full sentences with correct spelling except for the word *blowed*. When another child asked Joseph for help in spelling *washing machine*, he spelled *washing* correctly and retrieved the word *machine* from a story he had written on the computer.

Joseph also demonstrated the ability to recreate a classroom homework assignment that consisted of a question with the answer contained in math problems. Joseph' question was, What was something you drank yesterday at lunch? It was accompanied by a drawing of someone drinking. The answer to Joseph' question could be decoded with each number standing for a letter of the alphabet. Together, they spelled *chocolate milk*.

Teachers described Joseph' oral language—a personal strength—as sophisticated and "truly bilingual," particularly since his mother spoke only Spanish and his father spoke both Spanish and fluent English. His bilingual abilities frequently came into play in the classroom. Teachers noted that in January Joseph was reading Spanish words from a calendar with a Spanish accent. He also translated for Spanish-speaking classmates when a Spanish-speaking adult was absent from the classroom. In addition, he translated when students wanted to interview the Spanish-speaking man who brought lunches to the classroom.

Artistic expression is another area of considerable strength. "A remarkable artist," Joseph produces drawings that are "very detailed and colorful" and story-related. Joseph frequently uses drawings to illustrate his science reports, to accompany letters he writes on the computer, and for other writing assignments.

Mathematics and Numeracy

As with other academic areas, teachers considered Joseph at or above grade level in mathematics. Again, the teachers' primary consideration in working with Joseph during the year has been to extend instruction of whole class knowledge and skills areas for Joseph individually. In the fall, they described his interest and ability to solve problems as remarkable—"very able at explaining and thinking." He was said to "really understand" and to be "intrigued" by writing equations using symbols (e.g., -F - = -) for addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems. "He can almost always take things several steps farther than his classmates," recalls one teacher. Near the end of the school year, teachers noted that he was the first in the class to "borrow" and "carry" mentally (i.e., without manipulatives).

Commenting on a problem dealing with "place value," which the class was working on in the fall, Joseph' teachers noted that he had solved a calendar problem to determine on which day a certain school activity would happen. Joseph realized on his own that Saturday and Sunday were not school days and needed to be excluded in determining the correct answer. In the spring, the class learned to tell time as well—a task Joseph mastered in one week.

By the end of the year, his teachers expected him to have a grasp of number operations beyond that of most of his classmates. The class had already done multiplying and using manipulatives and drawing pictures and then writing out equations using the times symbol. "Joseph really understands that," one teacher noted. "He also understands the plus symbol

and the minus symbol and the times symbol and the differences they represent in the operations. He's just very comfortable with whatever new concepts come up in math."

Summary

Throughout the year, Joseph' teachers sought to individualize and enrich classroom instruction to provide him with appropriate learning challenges in the inclusive environment. While immensely enjoying his intellectual accomplishments, teachers stayed alert to his social and emotional development. They appreciated his ability to give and help other children as well as being sensitive to Joseph' own emotional needs in terms of learning to handle "teasing" and developing appropriate peer friendships. "Joseph is more than prepared for the next grade," his teachers remarked, expressing confidence that he had the problem-solving abilities, perseverance, and social skills to excel in third grade.

PETER

Introduction to Peter

Peter, who has red hair and a smattering of freckles across his nose, turned six on March 2, 1995, about mid-way through his kindergarten year. His parents describe him as "an imaginative, energetic, and verbal child who expects to be included in play and gets his feelings hurt when he is left out by friends." His parents also report that Peter is an exceptionally healthy child and that he has never been seriously ill.

Last year Peter was enrolled in a special education pre-kindergarten program and was labeled "preschooler with a developmental delay" (MIS #4 in the New York City System). However, Peter's parents did not want him labeled so he was decertified at the end of preschool and entered the integrated kindergarten classroom as a general education child. The coordinators and teachers have watched Peter closely during the year and consider him a child in "transition" due to his special education labeling the previous year.

Peter's parents are actively involved with his education and describe reading and discussing *Swiss Family Robinson* and other children's classics with him at bedtime. Peter has been enrolled in a number of after-school programs that provide activities and supervision between the hours of 3:00 and 6:00 while his parents are at work. Peter has been involved in four different play groups, karate lessons, and private counseling during the year. After school programming is part of Peter's parents' goal of accessing programs and resources that might assist in Peter's development and keep him out of special education. While after-school programming provides Peter with structure and new experiences and accommodates his parents' work schedules, Peter has told teachers that going to "two schools" makes a very long day for him.

General Progress

The support and attention that Peter has received from teachers and peers this year has been key in building a familiarity and comfort level that has allowed Peter to begin taking risks that have helped gain confidence and begin to see himself as a successful learner.

Peter has mastered transitions and has progressed in dealing with the unexpected using the classroom schedule. At the beginning of the year, Peter would cry and would not separate from his parents. During the first two months of school he would break down into hysterics and run out of the room chasing his dad. Sometimes Peter had to be physically restrained. His parents were forced to sneak out of the room to avoid a scene. By mid-year Peter was so involved in the classroom routine that a quick "Bye Dad" was all the time he had to spare.

At the same time, Peter's problems with transitions throughout the day were becoming less frequent and less intensive. Visitors and observers in the classroom could typically find Peter consulting the brightly colored interchangeable word and picture cards posted on the wall that dictated the class schedule. Teachers used the class schedule cards to help Peter develop a sense of continuity during the day and to help him deal better with the unexpected. Now he enthusiastically responds to teachers' requests of "What's next" and has, on occasion, been known to catch them when departing from the day's schedule.

For Peter, the schedule has been an enabler instead of a crutch. It has helped him sequence as well as deal with changes and little disappointments that are part of life. The occasion of this sixth birthday illustrates a new-found flexibility that teachers say Peter did not have at the beginning of the year.

The teacher explains to the class why Peter's birthday celebration needs to occur in the afternoon following center time and outdoor play instead of in the morning as scheduled. Peter changes the card on the schedule, is momentarily disappointed, and then smoothly moves into the next activity, center time.

Teachers contrast this incident with Peter's behavior at the beginning of the year when even a much less grievous incident than a delayed birthday party would have ruined the entire day for him and required a good deal of teacher time.

As Peter has learned the routine of the classroom he has become more organized and aware of himself. In the beginning of the year something as simple as getting things into his backpack was a challenge for him. He was disorganized. A typical sight would be Peter at the door with his hat on, but no coat or bag. Teachers report and observation confirms that now he typically knows what to do, where to be, and what materials he needs.

According to teachers, Peter is developing coping skills that were not present before midyear.

> *He still has bad days, but there is evidence that he is beginning to self-monitor. An example was that February day when he awoke and thought it was Saturday. Peter was angry but was able to articulate it with teacher assistance. He said, "I go to two schools and it is a really long day for me." Earlier in the year this situation would have caused uncontrollable crying.*

Peter is willing to try new things only when he feels completely comfortable with them. Peter had an extremely high frustration level at the beginning of the year. He would begin a task and quit almost before he started. In October he would sit down at the computer and immediately become frustrated and walk away. By March, Peter was observed inviting a friend over to the computer and working together at a game throughout the entire center time period.

Between the months of September and November Peter had been through four after-school programs. He wasn't sticking with anything for very long. According to teachers, it seemed that he didn't want to try or take risks for fear of being wrong. By the end of the school year he was much more comfortable taking risks and celebrating his own successes. This new confidence has become apparent in his creative play. On one occasion Peter was in the housekeeping area and he started cutting coupons out of the paper, something that he had never attempted before. He saw himself cutting straight along the dotted lines (a skill that teachers weren't aware that he could do) and he said, "Can you believe that I am really doing this?!!" The next day he extended this activity to drawing his own coupons and cutting them out. According to teachers he is more focused in his work and play and allows himself to try things so that he can succeed.

Teachers feel that Peter would not have succeeded this year if he was only one child among 25 to 30 others in a class with a single teacher: "There simply wouldn't have been nearly enough time to make Peter feel safe enough to venture out the way he has."

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

By the end of the year, Peter has developed the beginning stages of self-monitoring behavior. He now is more likely to recognize when he is going to have a hard time. He then has the opportunity to decide to make "the right choice" and remove himself from a situation if necessary. Early in the year, Peter's impulsivity did not allow him time to think and reflect on his behavior.

Teachers offer the example of a music class in March as evidence of Peter's emotional progress. In this particular music class Peter was feeling antsy and could not concentrate so he told the teacher, "You know what, I think I should sit out right now" and moved away from the group. The teacher walked over to Peter as he was sitting alone and he said to her, "You know, I'm not in trouble" (as if to say, I purposefully chose this—this is not something someone did to me). Later he recommended "sitting out" to another child who has frequent problems in the classroom. Peter said, "You know what, Tommy, you might want to try this."

Earlier in the year, Peter often needed to be reminded of the right thing to do throughout the day. He would sit on the edge of the rug and fidget. He would stick out his feet and move his arms around until he hit other students. Teachers often had to ask Peter, "Where are you supposed to be now?" He would become upset so quickly that there was no time for him to monitor his behavior and interrupt a cycle of acting out before it began. According to teachers, with Peter it was, "I want it my way or no way and a lot of crying."

These new-found strategies that decrease Peter's impulsivity also help make him more attractive to other children. He is now better able to collaborate with others and handle conflict situations with friends. In the beginning of the year Peter could be described as

"closed down" to others. He didn't quite know how to react to other kids in the class. Typically, in play centers he would go his own way, not being able to collaborate with other children on an idea. In the blocks center he could be observed working on his own creation in isolation, but if other children got in his area, he couldn't handle it and there would always be a battle. Teachers described him as a "hot head." He couldn't wait and listen and was quick to lash out at other students and teachers verbally.

By mid-spring, Peter was having very different experiences in the blocks center. One day in March, after collaborating on an elaborate block city with three other children, Peter had his picture taken with his cobuilders in front of their group creation.

At the beginning of the year, he didn't get chances to make connections with other children because teachers were often dealing with him in a corner away from the group. There were times when he would be hiding and teachers were having to coax him out of a situation. By the mid-spring his impulsiveness had decreased to the point where he was able to begin connecting with others. Peter has developed relationships with a number of children in the classroom and now has a favorite work partner. One incident during circle time shows Peter not only making connections, but also showing empathy for a classmate.

Peter was at the head of the circle leading students in making their choices for center work. The circle was a sea of little hands as all the children vied for Peter's attention so that they might be picked to choose their center next. One boy annoyed Peter by waving his hand in front of his face and chanting "Pick me, pick me!" Peter told the teacher (just loud enough for the offender to hear), "I'm not going to pick Walter until last, because he is bothering me." Peter turned to Walter and said, "You are frustrating me." Walter became upset and dropped his hand. Peter picked a couple of other children. And then his eyes went back to Walter; he seemed to recognize that his words hurt Walter's feelings. Peter then relinquished on his vow not to pick Walter and called on him. Walter jumped up excitedly—his hurt forgotten. The teacher commented, "Peter, I think you saw that Walter's feelings were hurt; that is nice that you picked him." Later the teacher commented to observers that was one of the first times she thinks Peter was actually connected enough see the impact that his actions have on others. She called it an exciting breakthrough for Peter.

Communication, Reading, and Writing

Peter is developing strategies for sequencing that help him learn letters and ordering, two important prereading behaviors. Developing an environment where children want to read and feel comfortable with print is a goal of kindergarten. Although having every child read is not the goal of kindergarten, children who are ready do begin. Teachers wanted Peter to recognize and name letter sounds and letter names. They characterized Peter's prereading behavior as about six months behind the other children. At the beginning of the year, he would not even become engaged during one-to-one informal reading assessments with teachers. He became easily frustrated and would not even try for fear of failure. Informal

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assessments in October revealed that Peter did not know any letters and could not use the ABC chart to help because he did not sequence left to right. He skipped around between a couple of letters and then gave up, saying, "I cant do it." In contrast, by the mid-year informal assessment Peter was attacking letters and print from left to right. He knew all the letters and how to sequence using the ABC chart, although he only had to rely on chart as an aid twice.

Critical prereading strategies that he has learned include "I want to skip it" (meaning, I don't know this one but I'm not going to get frustrated) and "give me a clue" (give me an initial sound). These strategies help Peter decode words and keep going instead of giving up when he doesn't know a word. Peter has developed a vocabulary of sight words and the confidence to attack new reading tasks.

Peter has gained confidence during the year in telling stories and is beginning to see himself as a reader, particularly with favorite books such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. Teachers report that it has taken Peter longer than many of his peers to begin to view himself as reader, a fact they attribute to his general need to feel like he can do something perfectly before he feels like a success.

Peter was developing concepts during the year that many students bring into kindergarten. While he has made great progress in reading since the beginning of the year, teachers consider Peter a low emergent reader and at the basic first-grade entry level.

Mathematics and Numeracy

At the beginning of the year, Peter was behind his peers in acquiring important concepts that are critical in developing mathematical literacy. Teachers reported that he did not understand 1:1 correspondence, nor did he understand spatial concepts such as before and after and more and less. By spring, Peter had developed 1:1 correspondence and was able to use this concept when counting objects during various activities across the day.

At the end of the year Peter remains behind many of his peers in sequencing and patterning. When counting five or six objects, Peter does not consistently know what comes number next. He has to go back to the beginning and count each object again. Similarly, when presented with a simple two-object pattern in an art or math activity, he cannot quickly process the information, decode the pattern, and repeat it. He needs to go back to the beginning of the pattern to know what comes next. While it is not developmentally atypical for six-year-olds to lag in these areas, teachers continue to work with Peter to develop premathematical skills in the context of various hands-on classroom activities.

Teachers are impressed with Peter's progress during the year. Many significant social emotional challenges that got in the way of Peter's learning have been solved. Teachers feel confident that Peter has developed new strategies and confidence in himself that will help

him persevere at any learning task. It is these strategies that teachers believe Peter will generalize as he moves into first grade.

Dylan

Introduction to Dylan

In the housekeeping center, a teacher helps Dylan and his friend tie kerchiefs around their heads to play "grandma." The boys imaginations wander and the kerchiefs are soon refashioned into headbands displaying the "colors" they've seen in their neighborhood. Creative play has turned from grandmas in the kitchen into a gang confrontation, something with which both four-year-olds are all too familiar. As the play turns into a fight, the teacher asks Dylan if he is making "the right choice for himself?" He responds, "No," thinks a minute, and then transforms the play scenario into a baseball game. As both children become involved in the game, the confrontation is aborted.

Making the right choice has not always been so easy for Dylan. He was labeled "preschooler with a developmental delay" at the age of three and was placed in the integrated preschool classroom. Dylan had to leave his neighborhood and ride a bus to his new school. The neighborhood he left behind each morning was in a troubled housing project in Brooklyn's Red Hook district.

In addition to the student centered instruction teachers provided in the integrated classroom, Dylan received group occupational therapy twice a week for 30 minutes and group speech and language therapy three times a week for 30 minutes. (Although occupational therapy targeted a bilateral deficit that impeded his use of his right and left arms at the same time, teachers reported no evidence of this defect.) After two years in the integrated preschool, this five-year-old is being decertified. He will enter kindergarten as a general education student in the fall.

General Progress

This year, Dylan has met and surpassed all of his IEP objectives. His teachers, however, feel that his IEP objectives, which describe disconnected behaviors subskills such as "sharing materials with others" or "demonstrating visual motor skills by tracing a square with 80% accuracy," do not capture that kind of complex changes they have witnessed in Dylan.

According to teachers, one big change lies in the connections that he is making in his learning. The experiential, hands-on activities offered in this child-centered classroom allow Dylan to link new experiences with his prior knowledge. He often makes connections and inferences that would not be expected of a second and third grader. On a trip to the Staten

Island Children's Museum at the end of the year, Dylan surprised the tour guide by predicting the correlated relationship between temperature and type of precipitation.

> *When the air is pulled back up into the clouds it becomes rain; because it is cold it makes snow; if it isn't so cold, it turns into rain.*

Teachers see a new confidence and sense of self-esteem in Dylan that they did not see last year. "This year he recognizes that he is a very bright little boy and I don't think he realized it last year."

Teachers have tried to capitalize on this new confidence and draw attention to Dylan's strengths, while putting less emphasis on the negative social behaviors that persisted. Last year and at the beginning of the year, Dylan's play was often inappropriate and rough. Sometimes he had his own agenda and would selectively listen to directions. Dylan also had a strong allegiance to another child from his own neighborhood who also happened to be part of the class. They would always get into trouble together, but Dylan was not strong enough to say, I have to get away from you right now. This child was not growing intellectually or behaviorally at the same rate as Dylan. Particularly around this friend, Dylan regressed and was pulled back to his street environment where the right choices weren't always clear. According to teachers, this year Dylan is moving in a literate world and the more learning successes he has, the less often his inappropriate behaviors surface.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

The teachers' main goal during the year was to help Dylan learn to make better choices and increase his self-esteem. At the beginning of the year Dylan was easily influenced and drawn to the negative behavior of peers. Last year, he was not yet able to control himself. If someone was in his way he would push them. He did not have the strategies or confidence in himself to remove himself from friends, activities, and situations that would get him into trouble.

Evaluation observations and teachers' running chronicle of Dylan's behavior show that he is now able to take himself out of situations that are detrimental. Teachers attribute Dylan's new-found strategies to consistency, verbal "think alouds," and a supportive climate.

We did a lot of talking through and supporting Dylan in situations. We used questions like "Is this where you need to be? What do you think you should be doing?" over and over again to help him stop and think through his options. Then, with prompting, he might come around with a solution like, "I need to leave the group." We also asked questions to get him thinking about how his behavior affects other children, like "Is your being here productive for Sean?"

Dylan can now separate himself from allegiances that used to get him into trouble and articulate his need to make good choices. Earlier in the year he did not have the language or strategies to do so. Sometimes he resists the temptation to act out on his own and sometimes he asks teachers or paraprofessionals for help. While Dylan has decreased his impulsivity to the extent that he now has time to think, at times he still needs some discussion to help him lay out his options and make a choice. According to teachers, this discussion also helps him realize that even though making choices can be confusing, he is not a bad kid. He is not a student who responds well to isolated timeout without guidance to reflect on what has happened.

Teachers feel that Dylan's two years in the integrated classroom have also had an effect on his young mother. They report that frequent conferences with teachers and seeing Dylan succeed is showing her that she has choices and is helping her to assert herself and exercise her own rights.

Communication, Reading, and Writing

Dylan sees himself as a reader. He plays at reading, filling in unknown words using his own imagination. Inferencing has become a particular strength for him. When listening to *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, a favorite book, he predicts out loud what the characters will do next and the consequences of their behavior. When he plays at reading, he uses voices to indicate dialogue between the goats and the mean old troll. He stamps his feet when the goats cross the bridge, reading the pictures as he pages through the book. He has memorized some pages word for word. On these pages he hesitates when he leaves out a word or uses synonyms that do not disrupt the context of the story. On pages he has not memorized, he has knows key words, such as "gorge" and "rushing river," that help tell the story. Dylan also uses book language like "Once upon a time" to begin his stories.

This year he has made a spot in the classroom library area where he sits after lunch and "reads" quietly. Although he has favorites, he often finds new books and asks adults to help him.

In November Dylan's IEP documented that he could not write his name and did not know the letters of the alphabet. By mid-year his writing showed reversals that are developmentally appropriate as children first experiment with letters. By the end of the year, Dylan was printing his name. Informal assessments show that he knows all the letters of the alphabet. He even uses the letters from the ABC chart to spell his classmates' names.

Teachers and observers describe Dylan as a "sponge," continually taking in and processing everything that goes on around the room. He asks why and how questions during story time. In November, Dylan did not use complete sentences to describe his experiences. Now he uses complex sentences to describe his thoughts, often adopting and repeating new words, which he adds them to his vocabulary. For example, one week during winter his favorite

word was "cozy." He used it a lot to describe his experiences: "Mom took off my wet clothes and put me into cozy pajamas."

Teachers feel that he is becoming a successful learner because he is a careful listener and he picks up on visual clues and gestures. When a story is read about the month of May, Dylan remarks, "Me and Kenesha (a classmate) birthdays are in May." When asked how he knew that, Dylan replied confidently that it was because "I am smart."

Mathematics and Numeracy

While not developmentally atypical for a preschooler, Dylan's IEP documents that he doesn't count or recognize numbers from 6-10. Premathematics skills were addressed through thematic units as opposed to direct instruction. At the end of the year Dylan could recognize and count numbers to 1-20 and had mastered important number skills such as 1:1 correspondence, sequencing, directionality, and spatial relationships such as over/under, and more and less.

Summary

According to his teachers, successes like Dylan are what inclusion is all about. One teacher who taught in self contained special education classrooms for a number of years prior to becoming involved with inclusion notes: "Here is where I think inclusion can reap the most benefits—at young ages. In the New York City School system it is highly unusual that a child gets out of the system once he or she is in it. Dylan's case is an excellent example of early intervention paying off."

While teachers are encouraged by Dylan's progress, they are also cautious when predicting his long term success. Because, for Dylan, decertification means that he is no longer entitled to busing. As a general education child, Dylan will have to return to his home community where his inclusion teachers are afraid that he will not have the positive role models he needs, nor teachers with the time to support him in making the right choices. They feel Dylan is in a precarious position and could lose the positive decisionmaking and coping strategies that he has developed if suddenly thrust into an unsupportive environment. Teachers are actively trying to get Dylan's mother involved in advocating his placement as a general education child in another inclusive school near his home.

MARCUS

Introduction to Marcus

Marcus has been playing with Legos® at a table where two other boys are playing as well. After building a car, Marcus takes a propeller from Stephen's car. Stephen complains loudly, then heads for the teacher. Just in time, Marcus relents, "Here's your stupid baby thing!" Marcus then speaks threateningly to Stephen and another boy, Martin, who is drawing. Marcus throws a punch at Martin who goes straight to the teacher. The teacher listens first to Martin's side of the story, then to Marcus's. She works with both boys to identify alternative ways they might have handled the situation. The two boys return to the table. Marcus asks a teacher to again spell "motorcar." She asks Marcus to try spelling it. He tries and she says "Good!" Marcus, smiling, returns to his table and, a moment later, offers Martin his hand for a friendly handshake. Martin shakes and another disaster is prevented.

Marcus is a precocious, intense first grader who has been assessed as having serious emotional difficulties. These difficulties are typically demonstrated through bouts of aggressive and angry behavior. He is, however, a healthy first grader and there are no special issues or challenges for him in the area of physical development.

Academically, Marcus has on or above grade-level knowledge and skills across a range of subject areas, including communication, reading, and math. One of Marcus's defining characteristics is the intensity that he brings to his work and the frequent need to produce "the best" work amongst his peers. While at times, Marcus would require some structure to attend to a task, he often became almost totally absorbed in his work. Moreover, he demonstrated a real need to persevere in trying out skills until he could perform them to his level of acceptability and to a level that would elicit his teachers' compliments. Although persistence and ability to stay on task are good skills for children to develop, Marcus seemed to be driven at times and any attempts to impede him would trigger his aggression.

Socialization and Relating to Self and Others

Marcus's teachers describe him as having a "short fuse" and note that he can be "very, very physical—he is capable of hurting someone." In first grade, diverse situations would lead Marcus to become frustrated and "blow a fuse." During these episodes, he would become verbally and, at times, physically aggressive to reassert control. For example, during classroom observations, Marcus became angry over not getting his way and punched a student in the face.

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These behaviors, as well as the fact that Marcus is large for his age and thus capable of physical intimidation, made it difficult for him to make friends in the class. Quite simply, the other children were often afraid of him and didn't always know how to deal with him. There is some evidence that Marcus himself was aware of the inappropriateness of some of his behavior. According to an assessment record, he stated that one of his major goals at school was "to learn to stop being bad."

By the end of the school year Marcus's teachers reported extensive improvement in Marcus's ability for self-monitoring, self-control, and appropriate socializing with other students. The teachers said that Marcus had gotten to the point of controlling his aggressiveness long enough to allow them time to intervene and mediate the situation. With mediation assistance, Marcus had greatly improved his ability and willingness to "work on" an issue or conflict through appropriate verbal communication. For example, the teachers might step in during the eruption of a disagreement between Marcus and another student; ask each student to share his or her perceptions of the disagreement; brainstorm some alternatives on how to settle the disagreement; and, finally, choose an alternative with which both could live.

When Marcus first entered the class, his aggression would erupt immediately when he was feeling frustrated. His teachers noted that the fact that he now tries and understands the need to talk issues through is a tremendous advance for him. The teachers also reported that over the year, Marcus had increasingly shown that he would and could try to work problems out with students in acceptable ways even without teacher intervention. Perhaps most important was that later in the year, his teachers noted that Marcus had in fact made "many friends" within the class.

Typically, Marcus was observed in isolated parallel play rather than interacting and socializing with other students. However, when motivated by an activity or situation, Marcus could provide real leadership to the class and/or small groups of students. Interestingly, when Marcus led cooperative groups, other students seemed impressed by his skills (e.g, making models, constructing elaborate Lego structures, etc.). Because, Marcus tended to react aggressively, his teachers worked with him on recognizing the fine line between authentic leadership and sheer domination. By the end of the year, several instances of his serving as a group leader had been observed.

It is interesting that Marcus's teachers also describe him as having a real "soft spot" in his sometimes swaggering personal style. On occasion, he could be very protective of other students and, in particular, of one girl in his class who was his special friend. Additionally, Marcus seeks and demands a great deal of physical warmth and contact from teachers. He was said to respond extremely well to hugs and physical strokes. The teachers also agreed that Marcus worked well within the class—applied himself, stayed on task, and so forth—as long as the teachers remained fairly close to him physically and spent time providing him with guidance.

Marcus's teachers wonder if he receives much or even sufficient individualized attention at home given that he comes from an extremely large family (10 children). They think that perhaps the large number of children has made it difficult for his parents to always keep up with his needs. For example, Marcus needs to wear glasses in order to see objects at a distance. During the early part of the school year, he came to school without his glasses despite the fact that the teachers had communicated to his parents that he needed them to see what was occurring in the classroom. Eventually, the teachers learned that Marcus's glasses had been broken for some time. The mother finally made an appointment to get him new or repaired glasses but, from the teacher's report, she never consistently made sure that Marcus brought his glasses to school.

On other hand, teachers reported that Marcus's mother really worked with them to learn how to deal with him better. At a parent conference, she provided examples of some home incidents when she successfully refocused Marcus before he lost control over a frustrating moment. She expressed a new confidence that she had begun to feel she could "do something" constructive other than fight with Marcus or stand by helplessly. Marcus's mother was also very interested in his academic work. She continually encouraged his reading at home and made sure that books and reading materials were available for him.

Communication, Reading, and Writing

From the beginning of the year, Marcus could verbally articulate and express himself well. His receptive abilities were consistently above average as well. His major challenge was in learning how to communicate appropriately and effectively with other students when frustrated, angry, or disappointed. This was a challenge that continued over the course of the entire year; however, as noted above, by the end of the year, his teachers reported that Marcus was demonstrating a significantly improved ability and willingness to talk with classmates in ways that would help resolve problems rather than inflame them.

Marcus entered first grade on grade level in reading—a "beginner reader" according to his teachers. He did and continued to enjoy being read to and reading on his own. His interest was evident in his attention to the story being read. One day, during reading time, his teacher picked up the book she had read from the day before and asked, "Does anyone remember where we left off yesterday?" Marcus immediately told exactly where she had left off and the page she had last completed the day before! Classroom observations also demonstrated Marcus's ability to read independently despite the routine distractions of an often busy classroom. During class reading time, Marcus was typically very active in asking questions and/or raising his hand to answer teachers' questions about the stories.

Assessment records indicate that Marcus's progress in reading was quite good. Over the year, he began reading books independently without pointing to words. He demonstrated that he could use book illustrations as cues to the content of the story. By the end of the year, Marcus very clearly knew how to handle books, how to hold books, and was reading

from left to right. Indeed, by the end of the school year, he had become almost "fanatical" about being able to read words himself and knowing sight words.

Marcus entered first grade with average entry or grade-level entry writing skills. Although he made progress in writing over the course of the year, this was one of the areas he struggle with the most. Marcus particularly struggled with spelling, but he demonstrated a great deal of persistence in acquiring spelling skills. During one observation, he drew a picture of a car, and the teacher asked him to write the word for his picture. Marcus sounded "motorcar" out a number of times, saying "mmmoooommmotooo," and asking for assistance from the teacher until he had written the word correctly.

Math and Numeracy

Math was and remains Marcus's favorite subject and one in which he performed above grade level throughout the year. In one observation of a math lesson focusing on addition and substraction, Marcus answered the teachers' questions before his partner could do so and worked more diligently than any child at his table to complete the lesson task.

Over the course of the year, Marcus demonstrated his understanding of numbers; could identify numbers up to 100, add and subtract up to 20, work effectively with manipulatives, measure with a ruler; and was very engaged in math problem solving.

Summary

Marcus's teachers are very proud of the progress he made last year, particularly in self-control and working out differences with others in acceptable ways. Marcus made good progress in academic areas as well and will be entering second grade at or above grade level in reading, writing, and math. His teachers believe that if Marcus can continue to receive individualized support in learning how to manage his socioemotional challenges, he may well be ready for decertification after second grade. However, they emphasize that he needs to remain in classrooms that have higher staff to child ratios and that provide consistent positive modeling of conflict resolution strategies.

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EMILY

Introduction to Emily

Like a lot of kindergartners, Emily is a bright-eyed little girl, full of energy. Although she has a limited vocabulary, she has a playful sense of humor that often gets her into good-natured teasing matches with her teachers at lunchtime. She came to the integrated kindergarten classroom in March of 1994, just three months before the end of the school year. Because Emily joined the class late and because she had some special needs, it was felt that she would benefit in another year of kindergarten for the 1994-1995 school year. She turned seven at the end of May, when many of her peers in kindergarten were turning six.

Before beginning in the integrated classroom at the end of last year, Emily was one of six children in a self-contained special education class for students with autism in a separate special education school. All of her classmates, like Emily, were labeled autistic and only one of the students communicated verbally. Emily was assigned a full time management paraprofessional who was responsible for managing her unpredictable and sometimes aggressive behavior. According to Emily's self-contained classroom teachers, while her behavior could be difficult, she was functioning at a higher level than her peers and did not have any models in the class. In the integrated kindergarten class Emily still has a 1:1 management paraprofessional and receives related services. These services include individual occupational therapy for 30 minutes once a week, individual speech and language therapy three times a week for 30 minutes, and individual counseling twice a week for 30 minutes.

At first, teachers were not sure if Emily would succeed in the integrated classroom. Last year it was not safe to leave her unattended for even a moment because she would run out of the classroom. Because she was nonverbal, Emily became easily frustrated when others did not understand what she wanted. When it was time to move from one area or activity to the next, she would show her discomfort with change by making very high-pitched little screams. According to teachers, "You could never tell what was going to trigger Emily to hit or push another child." Her paraprofessional spent most of her time managing Emily's unpredictable and sometimes aggressive behavior so there was little time for learning. At first, her behavior was so difficult and exhausting that the two teachers, the classroom paraprofessional, and Emily's paraprofessional adopted a tag-team approach for watching her.

General Progress

Teachers have been amazed by Emily's progress during the year. One of the biggest changes they have noticed has been in the connections that Emily is making with other

children and adults. At the beginning of the year observers viewed Emily as operating completely separately from the environment around her. As the year progressed, however, she has become increasingly involved as a part of the class. Teachers now see Emily attending to and receiving input from others.

> *At the beginning of the year she would come in and take over. It was like, "Watch out Emily's coming." She would knock over other children's work at the table and take over. She loves puzzles so much that she would take puzzles away from others. Now she adds to what the group is doing instead of taking over. She is becoming more of an observer. She observes and models everyone, especially one little girl, Teresa.*

One lunchtime incident particularly illustrates this gradual change:

> Four students were playing a lively number game at a table while eating their desserts. The first child said, "One"; the second child said "Two," and so on until a mistake was made and then the game begins again. They spied Emily coming toward the table, and covered their desserts thinking that she might disrupt the game. The children at the table watched Emily as their number chant continued, "One, two ..." and instead of disrupting the play, Emily, who had obviously been listening, called out "three" in sequence, adding to their game.

Teachers say that peer modeling and consistent behavior management are responsible for Emily's progress.

> *She knows that we will be consistent with her, just as we are with the rest of the children, like the time early in the year when she went into a tantrum at the Twin Towers building because she could not get popcorn. None of the other students were getting popcorn and we let her know that she could tantrum all she wanted, but she still wasn't going to get popcorn.*

Her mother has also noticed that Emily has better control in crowds. She attributes this change to her experiences in the integrated classroom and the classes' frequent trips to museums, parks, and other community places.

In the beginning of the year, Emily would not sit in the circle for group meetings. She would run or crawl through the middle of the circle, momentarily distracting the other students. She did not understand the concept of choosing an activity. She would roam between centers. Over time, she learned that when she puts her clothespin marker on a center card, she must go to that center. Emily has cleverly tested that rule by spending a few minutes in a center and then moving her clothespin marker to another center card thinking that she could move to another center unnoticed. But teachers have taught her that she, like the rest of the class, must stick with the choices she makes.

A lack of awareness of those around her and her own body caused Emily to knock materials over, bump into others, and step on fingers. While occupational therapists and teachers are still working to help Emily control her body, learning the classroom routine has helped.

Instead of entering the room like a tornado full of energy and creating havoc, she arrives in the morning, "signs in" like the other children and gets into the classroom routine.

While teachers, observers, and classmates see significant changes in Emily, she has not been cured of autism. Rituals, perseveration, and difficulty in communicating still get in the way of learning sometimes. For example, she can still become overstimulated by new experiences. Recently on a class trip to the circus, Emily, overwhelmed by the lights, people, and animals, kept putting her coat over her head to shelter herself from the stimuli. Teachers view this as progress for Emily because while her behavior was atypical, she was not screaming or out of control, but just protecting herself quietly. Emily still has bad days; however, they are not nearly as frequent or as intense as when she began in the integrated kindergarten.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

At the beginning of the year Emily was not the most desirable lunch partner for her classmates. She often wandered from table to table at lunchtime snatching other students' desserts. If she didn't want her lunch she would throw it. According to teachers, she still eyes the desserts children have on their desktops, but she no longer takes them. She waits, and may even name the dessert, as if to ask for some, "Chocolate, chocolate." Sometimes, she'll offer to swap by putting what she has on another child's desk in a trading gesture. While teachers feel there is more work to be done, Emily's waiting and trading behavior indicates an awareness of other children and a beginning respect for social rules that Emily did not possess when she began in the integrated classroom.

Last year, when Emily needed to escape a situation, she would run away or out of the room. About mid-year she replaced her running behavior with pinching. Sometimes she would pinch to escape and other times she would pinch just to get a reaction out of teachers or other children. For example, she would pinch and if the offended party did not say ouch, she would say ouch for them, acting like she was the one hurt. Getting Emily to stop pinching was a priority goal that Emily has met. By the end of the year, instead of pinching she now holds herself back. According to teachers, you can see on her face that she wants to pinch but is holding herself back.

Although Emily doesn't have a best friend, she is connecting with other children significantly more than she did at the beginning of the year. She shares more and models "friendly" behaviors that she sees teachers and other children display in the classroom. One day a child was sad, hurt by another child's actions, and Emily bought her a tissue. Sometimes she will rub another child's back at the end of the day as she has often seen her teachers do.

Teachers report that Emily is drawn more to kids this year inside the classroom and on the playground. She gets involved with games. Emily will say, "Ready, set, go" to start her friends off in the beginning of a race. Likewise, other students are interacting directly with her now instead of going through the teacher or paraprofessional to communicate with her.

Instead of working alone with her paraprofessional, Emily is tolerating working and playing in larger groups. According to teachers, "Last year she wouldn't put herself in situations where other children even wanted to play with her." This year she has developed relationships, although, to date, they are more of the big sister-little sister type than co-equal. But Emily is not always on the receiving end of help; sometimes she is the helper for her classmates. During an art center project, Emily recognized before the six other children sitting around the table that the art teacher's special scissors would cut the twine they were using better than the children's scissors that were scattered on the table. When Emily saw another girl at the table having difficulty cutting her twine, she walked around the table, got the appropriate scissors, and showed the girl how to cut her twine. During that same project, Emily helped a child who was having difficulty locating her art portfolio by reading the names on the portfolios until she found the correct one and brought it to her.

Communicating, Reading, and Writing

Emily has progressed slowly but steadily in using language to communicate, an area that many individuals with autism never develop. High-pitched screams and echolalic phrases taken from overheard conversations used to compose the majority of Emily's speech. As teachers consistently worked with Emily, hitting or pushing to get her message across has given way to taking a teacher's or classmate's hand to show them what she wants. At the same time, Emily has begun using language purposefully. While her echolalia has not disappeared, during the year, Emily has begun to gradually use language more to express herself and make her needs known.

By the end of the year Emily was putting two- and three-word phrases together such as, "Goodbye, Susan," "drink water," "Emily bandage," "I go basket," and "Emily comes out." She is also connecting language with her prior experiences. When her teacher came back from maternity leave, Emily patted her stomach and said, "No baby," recognizing that her teacher's shape was different. On another occasion, a teacher wore a bus pin to school and Emily sang "The Wheels on the Bus" song when she saw it. Teachers say that she is now connecting words with their meanings, something that would have never happened in earlier in the year.

Teachers feel that Emily's language is becoming richer in the integrated classroom than would have ever been possible in a segregated classroom with six other nonverbal children. According to teachers, in the integrated classroom, the room is simply not big enough for Emily to isolate herself. She has no choice but to interact with the other children. Emily's mother is pleased as well. She reports that "Emily is talking up a storm at home."

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Emily displays many of the same prereading skills as her classmates. She plays at reading using favorite books such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*. She points to print, will stay on one page at a time mouthing the words of the story, and has mastered the concept of left-right directionality with regard to print. Emily focuses and listens to stories that are read to her. She verbalizes extensions of the text that is being read. For example, if Emily sees a baby, she says, "Baby, wah wah." Although Emily demonstrates these important signs of reading readiness, she uses them inconsistently and only when she wants to. Teachers feel strongly that her playing at reading behavior comes from her modeling class shared book experiences. They doubt that Emily would have developed these skills in the segregated classroom since shared book experiences were not a part of instruction in the self-contained classroom.

Emily's is part of a class where the successes of every child are celebrated as a group. She has been part of celebrations for other children and has been on the receiving end of celebrations. One such celebration happened when Emily spontaneously went over to the chart, read the names on all the clothespins markers, and very deliberately got one classmate's marker and brought it to him. All of Emily's classmates cheered for her, "Emily can read! Emily can read!" While, Emily won't tell you so or perform on cue during informal reading assessments, teachers are sure she can read her classmates' names because she has picked out mitts and folders labeled only with names as passed them out to her classmates.

Emily dictates the letters of her name in order, but will not write them. Most of Emily's writing is still scribbling; however, she enjoys drawing and art. Her pictures typically feature a sea of faces—dots for eyes and noses, and a line for the mouth but on circle for the head.

Math and Numeracy

Emily's premath skills are on par with many children in her class. In the integrated kindergarten, teachers do not provide direct instruction in mathematics, but rather mathematics concepts and number sense are imbedded in all of children's work and play across the day. At the beginning of the year Emily would not participate in morning routine, but by spring she was counting along with the group during calendar, although she is unlikely to count on cue if asked. She is experimenting with concepts of difference and more in-center work. Emily notices similarities and difference in the sizes of her classmates lunches. In her "swapping" behavior she expresses the beginnings of understanding equivalency. She is doing some measuring on her own visually.

Emily is ahead of some classmates in her understanding of shapes. She loves building in math with rods and will independently order blocks and shapes. To create her own homemade puzzles, she closes off the shape and then fills it in. Teachers report that many other children aren't even thinking of shapes this way yet.

Contrast with the Self Contained Environment

Emily will try things and take more risks now that she has come to see the classroom as a safe place. Teachers feel that the integrated class provides Emily with challenges that she did not have in the self-contained classroom.

> *There was nothing in her old classroom to stimulate—no materials, blocks, or trucks out for students to explore and learn. They [teachers] worked individually with each child and everything was up on the shelves unless the teacher wanted a child to play with or use something. It was so teacher directed. Now Emily can handle all of this stimuli plus talking to other children.*

In her previous class, everything was very structured and rote. The integrated kindergarten does have structure, very definite routines, and schedules. But in the integrated class Emily has some freedom to explore within a structured environment. She has had to learn to work within routines and to make choices and stick with them. She has adapted to choice making among five center activities and has not been overwhelmed by the number of options presented to her, a hypothesis that keeps many autistic children in self-contained settings.

Teachers feel that Emily has come far and hesitate to say how far she may still go. "She has got so much inside and [the challenge is] just getting it out." While teachers are concerned about Emily's future in first grade next year as the focus moves more to academics, they realize that all of Emily's accomplishments to date make it difficult to predict Emily's potential: "With Emily, we have to stop putting limits on her."

FERNANDO

Introduction to Fernando

Fernando is a tall, long-limbed boy with bright, brown eyes and a handsome, engaging smile who gives himself wholeheartedly to any activity in which he is interested. This is his first year in a bilingual kindergarten inclusion program. Although a deformity prevents Fernando from hearing in one ear, he speaks well and clearly and has trained himself to use his other ear to communicate.

Fernando was classified as "hard of hearing" on his IEP. He has received speech and language therapy in Spanish three times per week for 30-minute sessions and hearing education services once a week for 30 minutes. During the year, the school provided him with a special hearing device in class, which includes a power pack worn by the teachers. This device helps the teachers monitor how well Fernando can hear what they say. Fernando' IEP also notes that he is susceptible to ear infections. He also suffers occasionally from asthma when it is cold outside.

When he started kindergarten at another school, the teacher thought Fernando was mute because he hadn't spoken at the preschool he had attended earlier. This teacher remarked that "they were totally wrong when they said he was mute and retarded. He is one of the most intelligent kids in our room." Fernando had a very difficult time adjusting to the school emotionally and would cry whenever his mother would drop him off.

Fernando has excellent gross motor skills and enjoys building with blocks as well as running, jumping, and playing hopscotch. His fine motor coordination is considered above average by his teachers; he cuts with scissors, draws, paints, and puts puzzles together.

General Progress

During the past year, Fernando has made excellent progress in kindergarten. His teachers note that he is very confident in terms of learning and voices his opinion to them. One of them remarked, "Fernando raises his hand right away in class even before he has completely got it—he wants me to know he knows it. He's not afraid to learn." Fernando was meeting IEP year-end goals before the year had passed. This child, who had not spoken at all in preschool, was counting from 1 to 10 and speaking in both English and Spanish by November.

In the middle of the school year, Fernando got a hearing aid (an FM unit) from the school as part of his special education-related services. Because his teachers felt that Fernando would need some time to adjust to the hearing aid, they started him out wearing it one hour a day. "We thought it would be hard for him," one teacher explained, "however, he has done great.

If he had had a hearing aid as part of his prekindergarten experience, he probably would have been speaking much sooner." In addition, the inclusion kindergarten's child-centered, language-rich environment provided Fernando with many daily opportunities to develop his speech through cooperative learning activities with peers and individually with teachers. By March, teachers noted that there was no longer a developmental delay because of the hearing problem. "No, he is very advanced," they concluded. "We don't think he needs speech. It's not helping him, especially with his hearing aid."

Watching Fernando at play in the spring, it was difficult to believe that this was the same boy who was shy and socially isolated at the beginning of the year. He was vibrant, eager, and interested in everything he did. Although not forceful with other children, he was learning to stand up for himself when challenged, as illustrated in the following scenario:

> Fernando is engineering a large, elaborate, intricate block structure that covers the entire block corner. He is both patient and focused on this task, intently engaged for well over half an hour. The structure (perhaps a zoo) has many large animals in it. One girl "steals" a dinosaur but Fernando firmly takes it back from her, although he does not get upset.
>
> A few minutes later, he decides to play with the police car, ambulance, and fire truck, making siren sounds as he drives them through his block structure. As he does, he provides the other boys in the block corner with a running commentary about everything that is happening. "Now I am a fire engine!" he shouts.
>
> Finally, it is clean up time. Fernando enjoys aggressively breaking up the block structure, energetically knocking blocks over and dispersing them. As he puts them away, he matches their shapes carefully, laying each one in the appropriate place on the shelf. Even though there are a lot of blocks on the floor, he cheerfully perseveres with this task for nearly 15 minutes until it is complete.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

Since September, Fernando has made great strides in terms of his own emotional adjustment to school and in separating from his mother. His teachers carefully monitored his social and emotional progress throughout the year. The team helped Fernando get through this difficult period by giving him more individualized attention to help him verbalize when he was upset (e.g., when he couldn't find his chopsticks or was disappointed about not having chocolate milk) instead of going off by himself into a corner and crying or sulking.

By January, he had begun to trust his teachers and was comfortable in the classroom. He had also begun to make friends with the other children. His teacher noted, "He is much better than when he first came here. Now we have to control him because he is getting to a point where he is running around and getting a little disruptive!" While he still cries

occasionally and sulks or gets moody if he doesn't get his way, these behaviors have become much less frequent.

Although he has opened up to teachers, Fernando still tends to be shy and somewhat self-sufficient when it comes to asserting himself with other children. If he has a problem with another child, he finds it difficult to directly confront that child and stand up for his own rights. Fernando' struggle to assert himself was present one day when he went to get his notebook from the cubbyhole holding his jacket. Another boy grabbed his notebook. Fernando panicked and glanced around at the other children who were nearby. "Help me!" he murmured. The boy backed down and returned his notebook. Fernando looked relieved and quickly left to go sit down at his table. His teacher commented that Fernando would not tell a teacher if he was having a difficult time with a child in school. Instead, he would tell his mother who would send a note saying Fernando complained that another child was fighting with him.

Fernando' teachers noted that by late spring he was really coming out of his shell socially. He was able to work well with both the adults and the other children and adapted to the special needs and challenges of his classmates. In addition, he was able to separate himself from his mother, which had been a primary concern early in the year. Although his behavior is still inconsistent at times, his crying incidents are much less frequent. If he is sad, he goes off by himself. His teacher observed, "Other children will tell me, 'Fernando is sad.' Then they try to distract him so he won't cry. Fernando is liked in the classroom. The boys look for him and play with him."

Communication, Reading, and Writing

One of Fernando' greatest assets is his eagerness as a learner. Compared to the beginning of the year, he now eagerly participates in group discussions and takes risks answering questions, even if he is not certain of the answer. By November he was already recognizing colors, matching to sample to copy pictures and letters, and learning to write his name, although he was not yet able to recognize all letters in the alphabet. He began taking books home a lot.

Fernando easily takes suggestions from adults regarding his work and quickly applies what he has learned while still valuing his own creative ideas and initiative. Fernando is an eager and patient mentor for other children as well. The following classroom observation illustrates his enthusiasm for learning, creativity, and ability to mentor.

> Fernando is completing a butterfly drawing assignment and gets excited because his pencil is writing in colors. He says, "Color, color" and shows another child sitting at the table. Then he says, "Yellow" and picks a yellow crayon. He seems to be matching to sample by looking at the picture on the easel and then looking down at his paper and coloring—and repeating.

Another child pushes a book over Fernando' picture. Fernando moves it, but doesn't get upset. Again, he makes a butterfly. He looks at the flip chart for guidance in completing his picture. He engages in the same match to sample process that he used for the first butterfly drawing.

Fernando then starts to make yet another butterfly. The para interrupts, "Watch me, Fernando, do it my way." She draws a forward and backwards "B" to make the wings and then draws an eye, mouth, and nose. Fernando wants to draw his own way but is very compliant. He does it his way and then copies the butterfly according to the teacher's model and shows her. (He does not get upset because he cannot do it his way.)

Fernando then teaches another child to make his butterfly wings "large," copying the "butterfly making method" he has learned only a few minutes before. He models it exactly as the teacher modeled for him. Clearly, even though he wanted to make butterflies his own way, Fernando must have seen merit in the teacher's method because he independently used it to show another child how to draw a butterfly. Fernando is a good teacher and helper on this day. He then studiously copies the word *butterfly* from the teacher's model.

By spring, Fernando was communicating and speaking fluently in English and Spanish, using both present and future tense. He understands what teachers say to him in both languages and moves back and forth between them when conversing. Fernando can write his name and recognizes letters of the alphabet. His teachers note that he is not interested in writing and never chooses to go to the writing center, although this is not considered atypical; he is considered average in terms of writing skills. Fernando is, however, keenly interested in reading activities and is eager to show teachers that he comprehends stories that are read to him. During group reading activities, he is quick to respond to what and why questions. Fernando is very alert in following the class discussion and he listens for other children's answers as well. His face lights up each time he thinks he can answer a question, and observers and teachers note that he is perhaps the most enthusiastic handraiser in the group.

Primary Language Record (PLR) assessments identify Fernando as an emerging reader in both Spanish and English. Teachers note that he is also developing decoding skills and is identifying initial letter sounds and words. While he is still insecure with himself as a "writer," his teachers encourage him to write letters that are familiar to him. Fernando also receives encouragement in this area from his family, who are supportive of his learning. "His mom is great," his teacher commented. "She reinforces his writing—both his first and last name. And his sister helps him with English assignments."

Ongoing PLR observation records confirm Fernando' literacy development over the course of the year. At the beginning of the school year, Fernando wouldn't speak at all. Then he began to identify pictures with a single word. By June, he was able to "read" a story using

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pictures in either English or Spanish (regardless of which language the book is written in). He knows words have meaning and has developed a sense of story. Fernando' teachers would like him to use sentences more often to give more meaning to a story. However, since he started out with a single word for a picture, he has made considerable progress during the year.

Mathematics and Numeracy

Although children are exposed to math concepts through integrated themes at the kindergarten level, mathematics is not directly taught at this grade level. Fernando was able to distinguish colors and shapes and count to 10 in both English and Spanish by November—well ahead of his IEP year-end goal for these tasks. He was also able to produce patterns and sequences. Although he knows his numbers from 1 to 10 and is eager to recite them, his lack of confidence in writing words is also apparent in his reluctance to write numbers. His teachers note that he did a great job with a "clock" exercise to identify different times. They report that Fernando also understands the spatial relationships in the puzzles he completes.

Summary

By the end of the school year, Fernando has come a long way. Given a negative preschool experience and a lack of a hearing aid, it was understandable that previous teachers and evaluators categorized Fernando as mute and developmentally delayed or retarded. However, because of his positive experiences as a kindergartner and his hearing aid, Fernando now performs like a typical kindergartner. He is doing very well in class. He has changed from a very quiet child to one who is an active participant in class.

The integrated experience of the inclusion program has helped Fernando develop socially and academically. His teachers note, "Fernando is very bright and there are a lot of bright children here. If he were in a typical self-contained program, Fernando would not have the peer role models he is surrounded with in this program."

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GERALDO

Introduction to Geraldo

Geraldo sits wide-eyed on the edge of his seat in the auditorium, watching and laughing as the sixth graders perform their play, *Willie Wonka and the Incredible, Amazing Chocolate Factory*, for the entire school. Although entranced with the live performance today, much of the time Geraldo is not interested or engaged in school activities. He is a small-framed, six-year-old general education child who is in the first-grade bilingual inclusion class. His score of below 21 on the New York City language assessment battery (LAB) automatically entitled him to bilingual services. Coincidentally, he was placed in an inclusion classroom that happened to be bilingual. Geraldo has nephritis, a kidney infection that started three and a half years ago, and is frequently out of school to get medication. While his teachers aren't familiar with the details of his medication, they note that he often comes to school with very sunken eyes and is not physically well. By May of this year, he had already been out of school 27 days; he missed 60 days of kindergarten last year.

According to his teachers, Geraldo' health problems have delayed his childhood development in all areas—physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. For example, he has perceptual problems that make it difficult for him to match to sample when copying or staying in the lines when he colors. He is not at all verbal and is very introverted around both adults and other children. The closest school relationship he formed during the year was with the classroom paraprofessional, who would patiently work with him one-on-one to do his school work.

Teachers see Geraldo' absences as a primary reason for his current lag in school. Even though he is not labeled a special education student, teachers think inclusion is extremely beneficial for Geraldo. They noted, "Geraldo is very fortunate to be in the inclusion class. If he were in a regular classroom of 25 children [in this school], he would not have the advantage of modified instruction and individualized expectations ... It would be impossible for the teachers to give him all the attention that we do."

General Progress

In general, teachers believe Geraldo has progressed this year, but very slowly because of absences. The general recommendation is that Geraldo repeat first grade since he has missed so many days and then if he does not progress, a referral for special education services may be made. His parents work with him at home, but teachers noted that his learning and behavior is consistent with a child who was absent for almost half of his kindergarten year.

One complicating problem is that Geraldo is the oldest of five children. Teachers say that his parents compare him to his more physically robust sister in kindergarten (for instance, his mother will say, "Why aren't you doing as well as your sister?"). Teachers noted that Geraldo clowns around a lot in class because he cannot keep up with others. He thinks, they believe, that this will hide what he does not know. At the same time, his mother claims that Geraldo is frequently very demanding and stubborn at home, insisting that she do almost everything for him, even laying out his clothes or putting on his coat.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

At the beginning of the year, teachers noted that their goals for Geraldo included improved communication skills and greater self-motivation. While very shy around other children, he was even more so with adults. "He is so introverted," one teacher commented, "you can't tell if he's there or not." In addition, she continued, Geraldo needed constant direction; he wouldn't initiate activities on his own. "He doesn't seem to be proud of the things he does. We've tried to motivate him with positive reinforcement but he doesn't seem to react to anything." At the same time, she acknowledged that his lack of motivation could very well be related to his health.

By spring Geraldo was speaking much more frequently in class, especially with other children. He had previously spoken so rarely to adults that even simple requests to use the bathroom were a cause for celebration by his teachers. However, Geraldo developed his most positive rapport with the class paraprofessional who, according to all classroom observations, worked individually with Geraldo. She has worked diligently with him on a daily basis to teach him how to write his name and keep him focused on learning activities. Geraldo would bring books to her to read to him as well. His teacher noted, "Geraldo needs to have a 'friend,' an adult who will be willing to work with him, in order to learn."

Communication, Reading, and Writing

According to the paraprofessional, "Geraldo doesn't want to write; all he wants to do is draw." In this bilingual first-grade classroom, teachers write letters, words, and numbers in Spanish and English on the easel or blackboard for children to copy in their journals every day. In the beginning of the year, Geraldo could not match copy to sample if the model was written on the board or even on a piece of paper directly in front of him. To assist Geraldo, teachers individualized instruction for him. At first, they made dashed lines on his paper for him to trace. This did not fit his learning style. Through trial and error, they learned that a yellow highlighter was too light but that blue or pink would work for Geraldo.

After Christmas his teachers began working with him on the computer to see if this would help get Geraldo engaged in his schoolwork; it did some, but not measurably. By late spring teachers noted that Geraldo could write the first two letters of some favorite words. For

example, "CAR" and "VAN." In his portfolio of sample work, the teacher had to write the final consonants for each word. However, Geraldo still had many reversals in letters, the type that are more typical of kindergartners than first graders. Nor could he write the letters of his name in order; for example, "u" would come before "i" or "s." By the end of the year, Geraldo was able to write his name correctly.

His Primary Language Record (PLR) assessments revealed that in the beginning of the year he did not seem to know what to do with books. According to his teachers, he would destroy, color, or draw on a book. Nor did he know which way to page through a book. By May he was turning pages from right to left consistently.

Likewise, in the beginning of the year Geraldo was not engaged in group reading activities and rarely responded to teachers' questions. By May he was making some connections when teachers read a book to the class (e.g., "This is my father" if the book is about a father). His teachers remarked, "He will make connections about things that are important to him, like a father."

Near the end of the year, Geraldo was also enjoying picture books and was learning to use a picture dictionary, although he was still not decoding words. He was also more aware of words tacked up around the classroom labeling different objects. His teachers also noted that he enjoyed rhyming words and would ask the paraprofessional to read to him.

In terms of speech, teachers reported that Geraldo is stronger in Spanish than English. At the beginning of the year, he would speak only when pressed or prompted. In November his vocabulary was limited to two-word phrases. By spring he still did not speak in full sentences.

Mathematics and Numeracy

At the end of the year, Geraldo was performing below first-grade level in mathematics. He had not mastered one-to-one correspondence consistently (a skill many children acquire in kindergarten or earlier). To illustrate this lag, his teachers noted that the class was divided into two math groups for one lesson. Geraldo was working in a group with four general education and three special education students. This group was working on writing numbers; however, Geraldo could not make the shapes of the numbers from one to five correctly. Compared to his group members and the rest of the class, he was behind.

When teaching "before" and "after," some children in the class were able to recognize numbers as high as 60 and above. In contrast, Geraldo could only do a sequence for numbers from 1 to 10. Again, his teachers worked to individualize instruction for him. Since all the children were involved in the same exercise, teachers surmised that Geraldo felt good about doing the same activity as the rest of the class.

Summary

Even though Geraldo has many developmental delays and health problems to surmount, his teachers feel that the inclusion classroom environment has been very beneficial for him. While "progress" was evident this year, each small gain was a challenge. His teachers and paraprofessional made a concerted effort as a team to individualize instruction and reinforce any positive learning experiences. They also strongly recommended to his parents that Geraldo receive tutoring support when he misses class due to illness; however, this did not happen. His teachers hope that with improved health and the stability of having the same teachers when he repeats first grade next year, Geraldo will be able to make more ground in all areas.

LUCIA

Portrait of Lucia

"If I were a cuckoo, I would fly to Mexico City," Lucia, a seven-year-old Mexican girl, wrote for the display outside her classroom. She and her parents are recent immigrants to New York City. Her sister still lives in Mexico and they return periodically to visit. For several months, her second-grade bilingual inclusion classroom has been studying the Mayan civilization as a thematic unit. Huge, colorful paper mache *quetzals* (mythical Mayan birds) that the children have painted and decorated with fancy feathers, glitter, and sequins hang from a rope strung across the room.

The children have also created large, colorful Mayan king and queen figures (six feet tall) and their own Mayan stone calendar (also six feet). A Mayan pyramid made from a cardboard box dominates the room. "The Hummingbird King," a Mayan myth, is written out in large letters on newsprint and hung with clothespins from the rope. The teachers frequently refer to a large world map to show children where the Mayan civilization existed (Mexico and Central America) and where their native countries are located. "Most of the children are from Mexico, Ecuador, and Columbia and are very proud of the Mayan civilization," note the teachers and paraprofessional who are from Puerto Rico, Honduras, and Canada.

Lucia has become particularly immersed in this unit. Her parents, who are very supportive of her education in general, took her to the library to check out books about the Mayan civilization. They were impressed that their daughter was learning things about her heritage, which they themselves did not know. In February, the three of them took a trip to Mexico to attend a wedding. Lucia was able to point out their destination on the world map in her classroom. She also wrote vivid stories about her trip when she returned.

Lucia, a general education student, is tall and lanky with a mature look and air to her. Shy and quiet by nature, she has blossomed in this classroom environment, according to her teachers. They consider her to be a very bright, independent, creative student who has high self-esteem. Pleased with the progress Lucia has made this year, one teacher concluded, "You have to give children a certain amount of time to get used to the English language and the American environment and then they start to come out. I feel that this has happened with Lucia. It's delightful to watch."

General Progress

Her teachers gave Lucia's parents a great deal of credit for her academic progress and adjustment to her new school. One teacher remarked, "One thing in Lucia's favor is that her

parents are really involved in her education. One night they had Lucia call me at home to express a concern about whether they were on top of everything for a particular assignment!" On her birthday, her father brought a cake to school for her and stayed with the class to celebrate. Teachers commented that, for many of their students, this parental partnership with the school was missing, and this support made a big difference in terms of how well a child performed in school.

At the beginning of the year, Lucia's teachers set initial goals and expectations for her, which included (1) socializing more with other children and (2) speaking more in English. By mid-year, she had met these goals. Her teachers also noted that her fine and gross motor skills were above average: She copies well from the board, has good hand control, and has a solid awareness of her body when running.

Socializing and Relating to Self and Others

Lucia started school in New York City recently, having attended pre-kindergarten through first grade in Mexico. Although Lucia was initially quiet and withdrawn, her teachers reported that within two weeks she was a typical second grader in every way: emotionally, socially, and developmentally. Earlier in the year, teachers had been concerned that her shyness and reserve could potentially interfere with her ability to socialize with other children. Her mother thought that, in the beginning, Lucia was afraid of the teachers. Over the course of the year, however, Lucia made friends with her classmates. By spring, teachers saw that an innate reserve was just part of her personality and it did not hinder her in connecting socially with others.

Teachers noted that other children like Lucia's mellow personality and were comfortable having her tutor them in classroom assignments. One girl, Rebecca (a primarily English-speaking child), especially revered Lucia. At first, Rebecca cried every day at school. By modeling appropriate behavior, Lucia helped her gain better self-control. Teachers note that Rebecca's work has improved with Lucia's help as well.

When she is not motivated, Lucia's thoughts tend to drift away from the class activity at hand, according to classroom observers. Her teachers surmised that at times she was not challenged during group activities and felt bored or restless. They noted that she would move to the back of the rug to be part of a clique of girls. While her teachers noticed this, they felt that there were trade-offs to directing her attention back to the activity at hand. They felt Lucia's socializing was an indicator that she was ready to relate to other children. And since it wasn't affecting her school work, they chose to indulge this new socializing behavior.

As noted earlier, Lucia's family support has given her a strong sense of self-esteem and independence. Teachers commented that she "adores" her parents and constantly talks about what is happening at home. She frequently talks about her mother expecting a baby soon.

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When Lucia and her parents were in Mexico for a month, her teachers noted with surprise that her newly developed skills in speaking English had not regressed during the time she was away.

Communication, Reading, and Writing

At the beginning of the year, teachers characterized Lucia as Spanish-dominant. She was performing on a second-grade level in speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish, her native language. With regard to English, her second language, Lucia was able to understand and speak some words in English and to recognize some words written in English on the board. Her teachers' year-end goal was to increase Lucia's confidence and ability to speak in English instead of relying on Spanish.

Teachers noted that, initially, Lucia was most comfortable expressing herself through writing—regardless of the language or the subject area. For example, she would write and illustrate stories about her family and show them to her teachers. Lucia showed the same preference for written communication in math as well. If she knew the answer to a problem, she would not say it aloud, but she would write it down on paper. Her journal revealed that Lucia had transferable writing skills between languages; her sentences and paragraphs would be interlaced with English words such as titles, proper nouns and slang expressions.

By mid-year, teachers remarked that Lucia had grown dramatically. Classroom observations further confirmed this trend. She was taking many risks in speaking English and was a lot more outgoing. Her ease in moving between Spanish and English was also increasingly evident. For example, one day she wrote in Spanish in her journal about a movie that she saw in English. When it came time to speak about the movie in English, she spoke in that language. Her verbal communication had reached a level where she was able to use complete sentences and be understood in English. She was able to understand and follow verbal directions given to her in English. She did English phonics homework every night and read the homework directions independently. "She has even helped her mother with English," one teacher noted.

At the end of March, Lucia was writing whole paragraphs in Spanish that were 8 to 10 lines long. She continued to write vivid stories in her journal about her family (e.g., going to work with her father and then going to buy ice cream), which she would illustrate with "happy family" drawings and houses.

Her penmanship continued to be on grade level, and she was learning to master writing conventions such as indenting paragraphs and capitalizing the first word of a sentence. Of even greater significance, however, was the fact that Lucia was writing in English more frequently. While her Spanish paragraphs were grammatically correct, her English sentences often used Spanish grammatical structure, indicating that Lucia was still sorting out structural grammar differences between the two languages.

Mathematics and Numeracy

As noted earlier, at the beginning of the year Lucia would not verbalize answers to math questions but would write the answer on paper. Although she would not answer in class, she would tell a friend what was going on in class. Lucia could count, add, subtract, and recognize numbers; at this point in time, she was able to do and understand more in Spanish than English.

Mid-year, her teachers set new year-end math goals to challenge Lucia. These included counting from 500 to 1000, learning time, counting by 10s, and multiplying by 5s and 10s. They assessed Lucia as average in math or perhaps a bit below average. Near the end of the year, her teachers noted that Lucia was "taking off" with patterns and that her new level of confidence at expressing herself verbally was enhancing her ability to talk about mathematical ideas and concepts in everyday language using manipulatives—a critical competency for children, according to the 1989 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards.

Summary

Lucia will be moving on to the third grade in the fall. Delighted with how far she has come this year—both academically and socially—her teachers are confident that she will continue to make solid progress next year as well. One teacher summed up her high regard for her by saying, "She is a healthy seven-year-old. She is willing to learn, willing to take risks as she learns to speak English, and willing to give of herself to help other children. That is Lucia."

Results and Interpretations of the Expert Validation Panel

A total of 11 experts in early childhood education, special education, and bilingual education reviewed the student portraits which follow. The group included experts from across the country and Britain. (Names and areas of expertise of this group are found in Appendix A). Their task was two-fold. First they were to use the story presented to assess the degree of progress made by individual children given their unique strengths and challenges. Second, they were to comment on whether or not they felt the child was benefitting to the degree that he or she should continue placement in an inclusive classroom. Each portrait was reviewed by at least two experts. Experts agreed in their categorical ratings of student progress 88% of the time. In the few cases (n = 3) where there was not exact agreement, pairs of ratings differed by no more than one category (e.g., extraordinary to good.)

Overwhelmingly, the consensus was that all 15 of the portraits (7 general education and 8 special needs) indicated extraordinary or good progress given individual students' strengths and challenges. Specifically, in the area of socializing and relating to others and self, respondents rated special needs childrens' progress as extraordinary or good 100% of the time and general education childrens' progress as extraordinary or good 93% of the time. In the area of communicating, reading, and writing, respondents rated special needs childrens' progress as extraordinary or good 100% of the time and general education childrens' progress as extraordinary or good 88% of the time. Finally, in the area of mathematics, respondents rated special needs childrens' progress as extraordinary or good 93% of the time and general education childrens' progress as extraordinary or good 88% of the time. Experts rated special needs childrens' progress as extraordinary more frequently than general education children. Their commentary indicated that because most general education children began at a higher level (i.e., with more advantages and skills and readiness for learning) their progress was more expected and less marked. In fact, experts comments indicated that they typically reserved the rating of extraordinary for progress **well beyond that which would be expected given a childs' needs and strengths**. Given this frame of reference, it is not surprising that the term "good", as opposed to "extraordinary", was used more often to describe general education students' progress.

Experts only rated one child as having not progressed in the ECI classroom. For this struggling general education child whose medical problems resulted in chronic absences, experts felt that additional home and hospital based interventions were necessary to ensure progress. Tables 1 - 3 illustrate experts' ratings of childrens' progress in the key areas of socialization, reading, writing and communication, and math and numeracy.

All experts responding had no concerns about 14 of the 15 students remaining in the inclusive classroom. For all children with identified special needs, Experts felt that the inclusive environment afforded benefits that contributed significantly to their progress. In fact, in some cases, experts were adamant that the child would have to remain in an inclusive

environment for progress to continue. Summary comments about the appropriateness of the integrated placements included the following:

It would seem to me to be not only important, but critical, that Julio remain in the inclusive classroom. Only then will he have access to general education students as language models, and it has been these language models that have been a big part of Julio's success to date. It is also clear that Julio learns best when he is in an environment that is flexible enough to allow him to explore those things that are motivating to him.

Obviously the socialization, level of education, atmosphere in the classroom works for Geraldo.

Jack definitely needs to continue in an inclusive environment. He needs direct instruction in social behavior in the typical classroom environment so that he can continue to experience and learn from the natural consequences of his behavior. Also, his classmates need to see him succeed in social contexts, as they have seen him succeed in academic contexts.

The stimulation that Emily receives from both her teachers and peers is an integral part of her education and her ability to connect with the world around her.

The inclusive setting has clearly offered Carlos so many benefits in terms of interactions with peers and access to a mainstream (general ed) curriculum.

It is apparent that the more "normal" situation this childs' classroom has been instrumental in ferreting out her abilities. Her progress is noteworthy.

Table 1
External Experts Judgements of Student Progress in the Area of Socializing and Relating to Others and Self

Socializing and Relating to Others and Self		
Degree of progress:	Special Needs Children (n expert ratings =16)[1]	General Education Children (n expert ratings = 14)
extraordinary	93%	67%
good	7%	26%
okay	--	7%
no gains or loses	--	--
lost ground	--	--

Table 2
External Experts Judgements of Student Progress in the Area of Communicating, Reading and Writing

Communicating, Reading, and Writing		
Degree of progress:	Special Needs Children (n expert ratings = 16)	General Education Children (n expert ratings = 14)
extraordinary	80%	48%
good	20%	40%
okay	--	6%
no gains or loses	--	6%
lost ground	--	--

Table 3
External Experts Judgements of Student Progress in the Area of Math/Numeracy

Math/Numeracy		
Degree of progress:	**Special Needs Children** (n expert ratings = 16)	**General Education Children** (n expert ratings = 14)
extraordinary	73%	48%
good	20%	40%
okay	7%	6%
no gains or loses	—	6%
lost ground	--	--

1. each childs' portrait was rated by two experts so the total number of ratings is two times the number of children profiled.

Experts felt the inclusive ECI classrooms also worked well for typical and excelling general education students. The two raters did not completely agree on the benefits of inclusion only in the single case of one excelling general education student. Both respondents, agreed that the child in question had, in fact, succeeded in kindergarten, however they were divided in their comments regarding whether or not she should remain in inclusion. One expert unequivocally supported continued inclusive placement, while the other had questions about the extent to which the inclusive environment would remain challenging for this child as she moved on in the elementary grades. Specifically, this experts' recommendation was that the

inclusive placement would only continue to be appropriate for this child if her artistic talents could continue to be nurtured, and if advanced academic challenges and socialization opportunities could be provided. In all other cases, experts had no concerns about general education children remaining in the inclusive classrooms. Their comments regarding general education children's progress include the following:

> *Peter has clearly made a great deal of progress given his initial difficulties and his demanding schedule outside school. Particularly impressive are the observations in the portrait which describe how Peter has begun to monitor his own behavior, to work successfully in collaboration with other children, and to identify with anothers' point of view.*
>
> *The child has maintained his "advanced" status in this class. His progress, therefore, is in line with his past performance.*
>
> *The teaching team seems fully aware of Adian's individual strengths and needs and they plan for him. Their awareness of the social-emotional, as well as the academic, is exemplary...Also the data they furnished for the portrait indicates their awareness of principles of developmentally appropriate practice and curriculum.*
>
> *Lindsay seems to be continuing to develop. She began the year developmentally advanced in communication and numeracy and ended the year advanced in these areas. Lindsay overcame a negative social experience in a previous preschool and made friends. By being in an inclusive setting she found a 'niche' as an interpreter for a child with communication difficulties.*

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APPENDIX A

Descriptive Data on ECI Population and Evaluation Sample

A 9.5 percent sample of children (n=34) was selected across ECI classrooms within the four schools. Care was take to ensure that the sample was representative of all the children in the initiative. The sample included representative numbers of males and females and students of diverse ethnicity, and students from pre-kindergarten through third grade. However, equal rather than proportionate numbers of regular education and special education students were included in the sample since the point of the study was to explore how children in both of these populations fared in ECI classrooms. Special education classifications included children with SIE and MIS. Moreover, the number of children with each of these classifications who were included in the sample were proportionate to those found in the larger school populations. General education students included two students who scored below the 21st percentile on the LAB test and representative numbers of students from each of the four schools.

The following table provides a brief overview of NCREL's sample of targeted children broken out by sampling category.

Table 1
Representative Sample Generated From Targeted Children in Each Classroom (n = 34)

Selection Characteristic	#
Sex: Males	19
Females	15
General/Special Education: Special education	17
General education (2 general education children had LAP score below 21%)	17
Grade: Pre-kindergarten	3
Kindergarten	9
First	12
Second	8

Selection Characteristic	#
Third	2
IEP categorization for special education children: MIS 2 (ages 6.9–21 average intelligence mild mental retardation; moderate emotional disturbance)	1
MIS 4 (ages 4.9–7 umbrella classification mild mental retardation; developmental delay)	8
MIS 5 (ages 4.5—15 mild to moderate mental retardation; mild emotional disturbance)	1
SIE 3 (ages 4.9–21 autism)	1
SIE 6 (ages 4.9–16 mild to moderate mental retardation; severe emotional disturbance)	1
SIE 7 (ages 4.9–21 severe emotional disturbance and average intelligence to mild mental retardation	5
Ethnicity: African American	9
Caucasian	9
Hispanic	15
West Indian	1
School: #321	8
#15	8
#372	12
#150	6

APPENDIX B

VALIDATION PANEL

EXPERT	AFFILIATION	LOCATION
Adelle Renzaglia, Ph.D. Professor	University of Illinois Dept. of Special Education	Champaign, Illinois
Betty Rosa, Principal	Public School #53	Manhattan, New York
Tynette Hills, Ph.D.	Independent Consultant	Durham, North Carolina
Susanne Lee Visiting Lecturer	University of Illinois Dept. of Special Education	Champaign, Illinois
Vivian Powers-Richard, Ph.D. Early Childhood Director	Illinois Research Institute	Des Plaines, Illinois
Karen Carson, Ph.D.	Ohio State University Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center	Columbus, Ohio
Olivia O'Sullivan, Advisory Teacher	Centre for Language in Primary Education	London, England
Barbara Bowman, Ph.D. President	Erikson Institute for Advanced Study in Child Development	Chicago, Illinois
Michelle Johnston, Ph.D. Executive Director	Northern Lower Michigan Teaching Leadership, Teaching and Learning Consortium	Traverse City, Michigan
Barbara Schafer Executive Director	The Association for Retarded Citizens	Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Char Myers, Ph.D. Evaluator	Minneapolis Pubic Schools Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment	Minneapolis, MN

APPENDIX C

The Evaluation Method

The 1994–1995 study of student impacts is one part of NCREL's comprehensive evaluation of the New York City Early Childhood Initiative. Sister reports produced this year, *Parent Perceptions of Impact* and *A Briefing on Systems and Resources*, provide an in-depth look at parents' perceptions and roles, and at how the Early Childhood Initiative impacts and has been impacted upon by systems and resources.

Fairly judging the impacts of inclusive education for young children is as challenging as implementing inclusion itself. The *New York City Chancellor's Frameworks* and the professional teaching organization standards (i.e., NCTM Mathematics Standards, and NCTE English Standards) provide content standards that are valid learning outcomes or targets for all students. However, developmentally appropriate practice tells us that the "normal" range of behavior is very broad during the early childhood years. Therefore, measuring change of ECI students using only outcome-based content standards or a standardized test would have ignored the fact that for young children, very disparate end-of-year progress may be acceptable depending on each students' individual developmental level. In addition, since the inclusive classrooms serve students with such a diverse range of strengths and needs, using broad based learning outcomes as "the progress standard" did not offer the precision necessary to truly understand subtle changes that occur for young children, particularly those with special needs. Finally, judging the impact ECI has had on young children over the short term is particularly challenging, not only because all children are unique, but also because it is impossible to definitively judge what would happened to a child if he or she were not placed in ECI.

With these constraints in mind, a methodology that measures students against their own individualized expectations was designed for examining children's growth over time. Multiple measures were used to illustrate this growth. Teachers' expectations or goals for children in academic and social areas were determined through an initial interview with each teaching team. The language teachers used to describe their expectations and goals often mirrored *The Chancellors Frameworks for Pre-kindergarten through Second Grade*. Ongoing observation and parent and teacher interviews were used to follow students' progress during the year. In addition, teachers were asked to compile portfolios that included artifacts of the students' work, running observations by teachers, Primary Language Record Observational assessments, and IEPs and IEP progress reports (where applicable).[1] The method is consistent with the principle of individualization that undergirds inclusive education.

The information accumulated across all data collection activities was synthesized using triangulation techniques (Jink, 1988). Observers and interviewers were brought together to

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[1] No standardized test information was available for Pre-K through 2nd grade. Standardized Tests were conducted only with the one class of third grade students.

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build stories or portraits of student progress. Portraits were sent to each teaching team for their review.

While readers can draw their own conclusions from the cases presented, the expertise of the validation panel helps answer the question, How good is good enough? The panel of 13 experts in early childhood education, special education, and bilingual education reviewed the student portraits contained in this report. The group included experts from across the country and Great Britain. (Names and areas of expertise of this group are found in Appendix B). Their task was to (a) use the story presented to comment on student progress and (b) comment on whether they felt that the child was helped or hindered by the inclusive environment. Each profile was reviewed by at least two experts.